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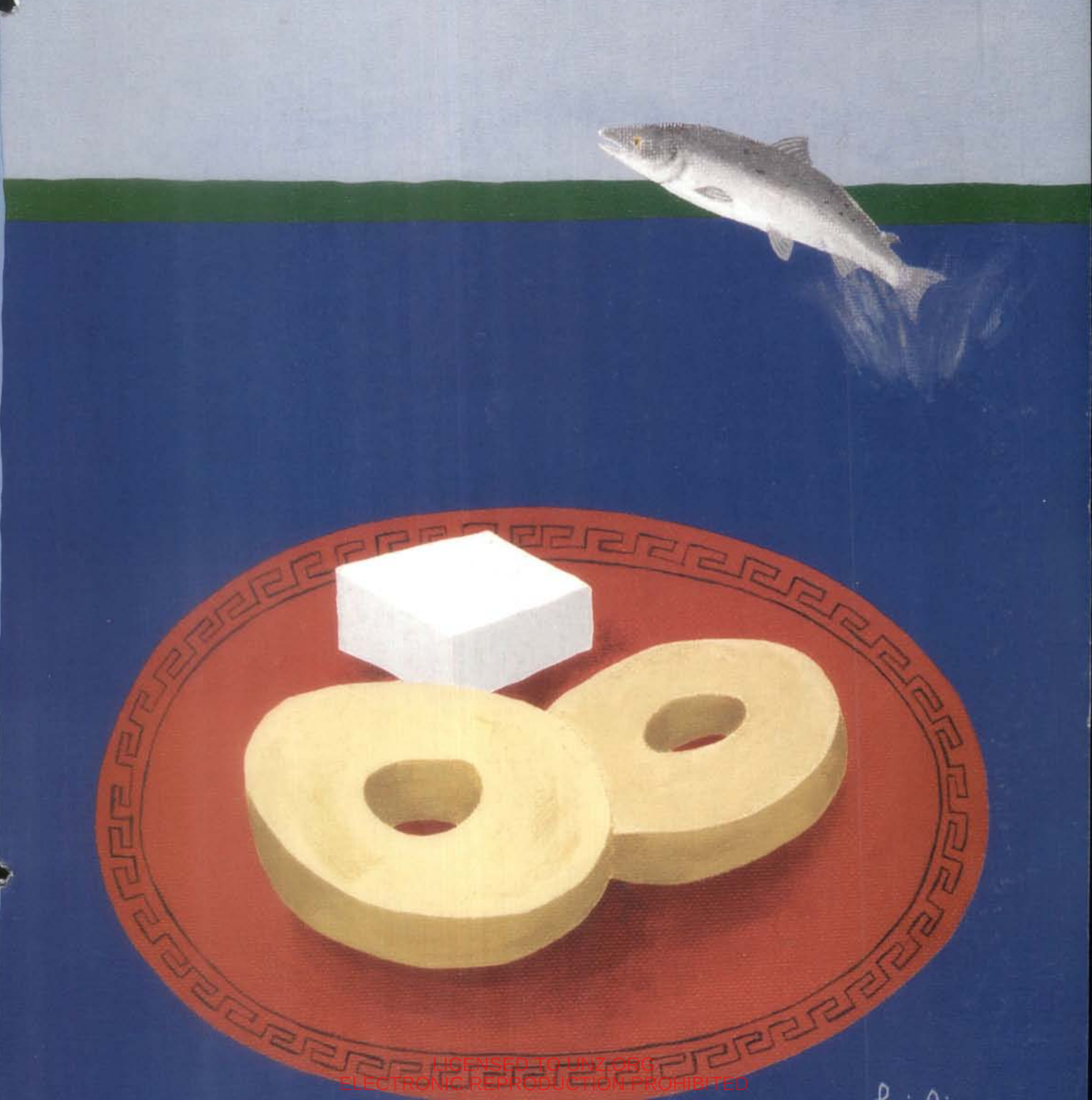

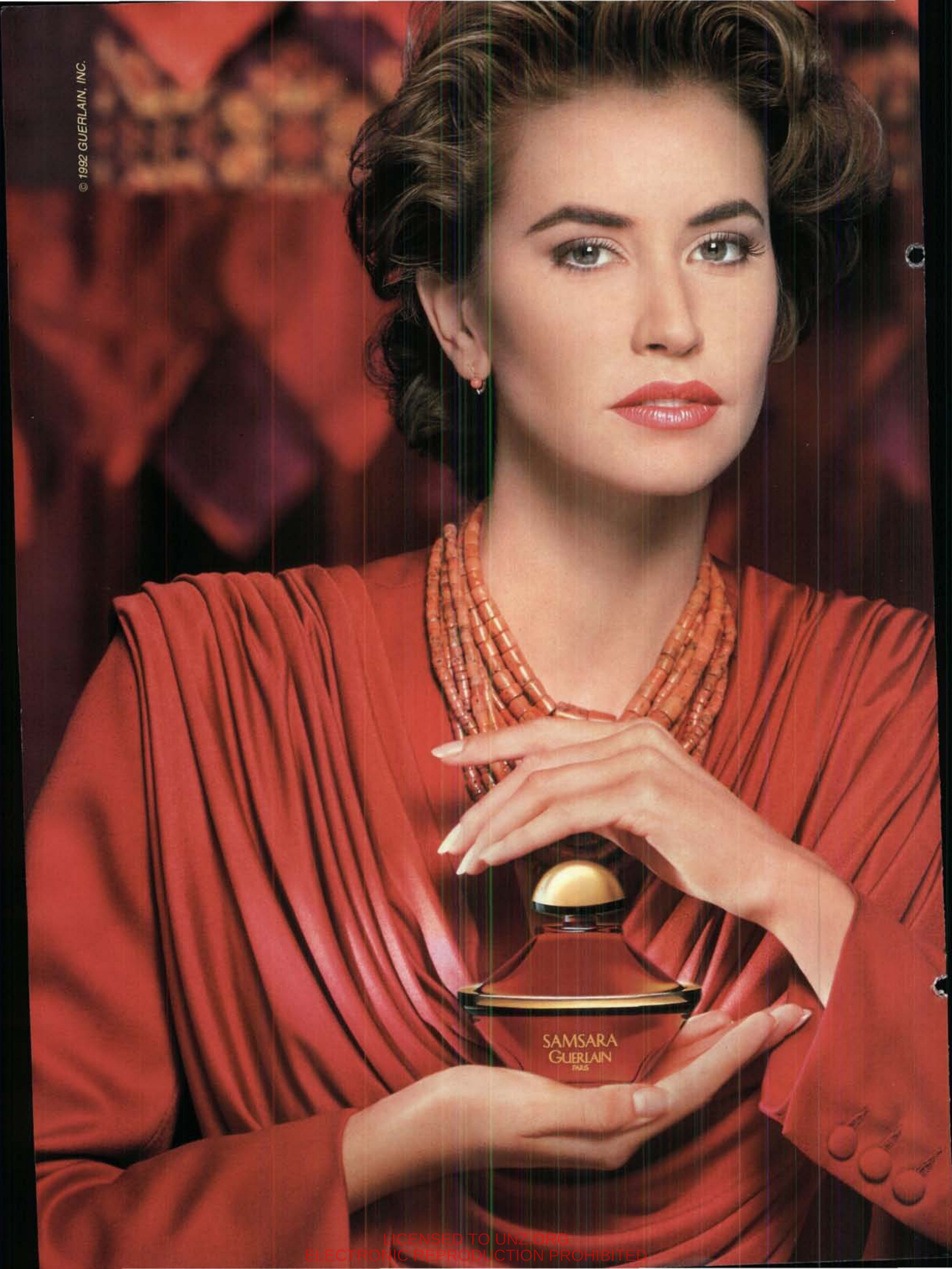
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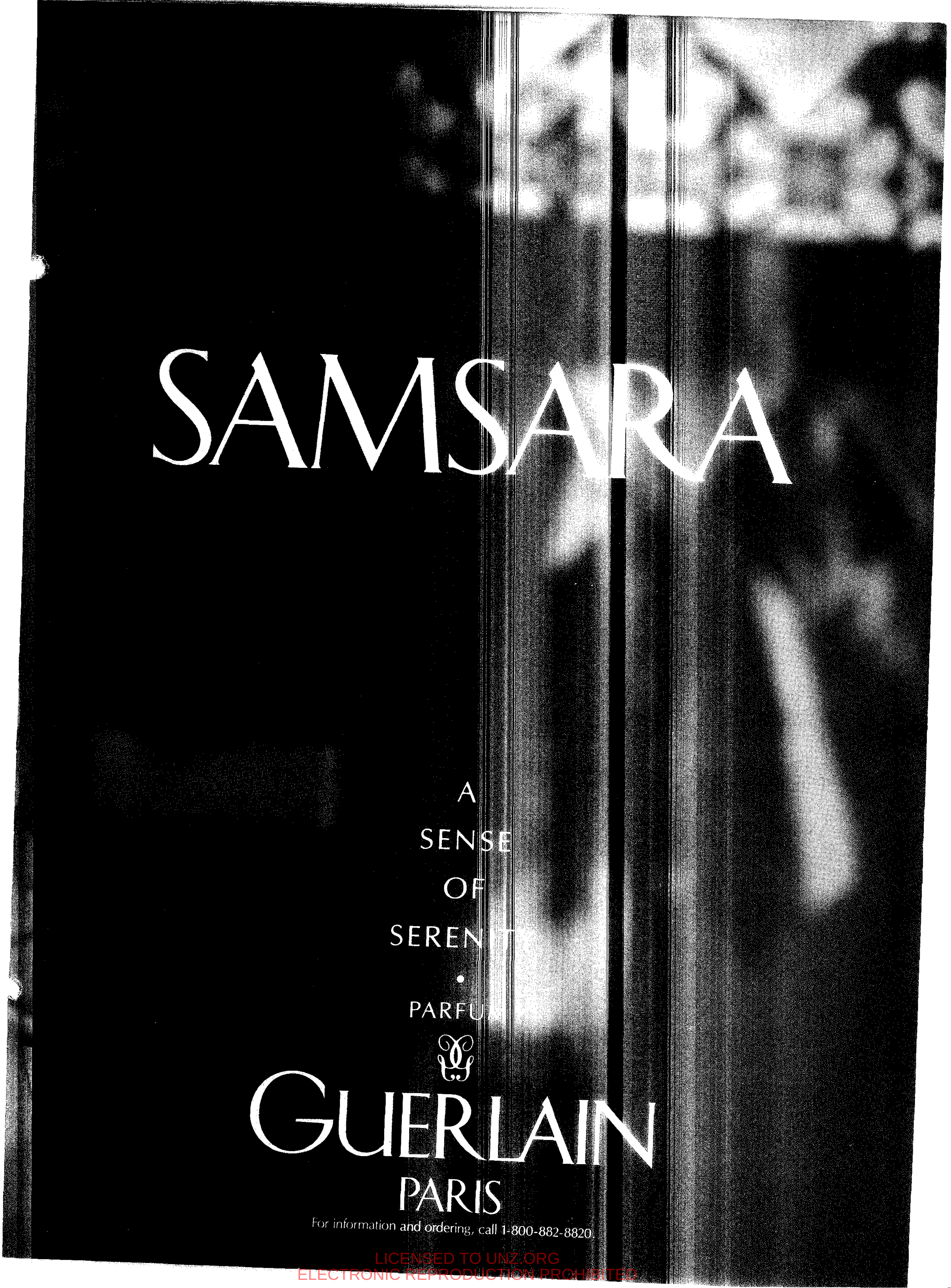

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

TAKE a look around at current pop culture and you might think the nineteen-seventies were a golden age. On the radio, rapper after rapper "samples" that decade's hits. On television, Aaron Spelling rises again. Downtown restaurants and clubs seem to play nothing but the Carpenters and K.C. and the Sunshine Band. And several movies about the decade's phenomena, including one about Studio 54, are in the works. But the theatre has been more or less immune to the seventies retro-virus. It's true that a revival of "Hair" (with Paula Abdul) has been mentioned, but, chronologically, that's about the outer limit of the current recycling efforts. As far as we know, no one has yet proposed bringing back "A Chorus Line."

If you are yearning for a musical awash in seventies spirit, however, you should head for the Master Theatre, where the Artists' Perspective production of "Chess" has been extended indefinitely. Actually, "Chess" was neither written nor produced in the seventies. It was launched in 1984, as an album, and first staged, in the West End, in 1986; since then, it has been incessantly tinkered with by Tim Rice, the writer of the show's book and lyrics, and by many other hands. (The show had a brief Broadway run in 1988.) But the synthesizer-driven music has always struck our ear in a seventies sort of way, which is no surprise, given that "Chess" 's composers had their greatest success as members of the Carter-era Swedish pop group Abba.

In the Artists' Perspective staging, the action—a face-off between American and Soviet chess players—unfolds squarely in the late Nixon era. The costumes capture an age when flowery prints were just beginning to harden into heavy leather, and the settings reflect a moment when industrial-gray stairs and platforms passed as furniture. None of this made us particularly wistful for the seventies, despite the efforts of an extremely attractive cast. We felt nostalgic only once, during the first-act closer, "Anthem." On Broadway, it had been shatteringly sung by David Carroll, a performer who died last month. Mr. Carroll had been ill off and on over the past two years, but even with his lingering sickness he insisted on taking part in a much-delayed recording of "Grand Hotel," in which, following "Chess," he'd played the Baron. No urge there to pine for the recent past; just a desire to keep working in the here and now. And so Mr. Carroll did, collapsing in the recording studio—in harness to a strong will and a luminous talent.

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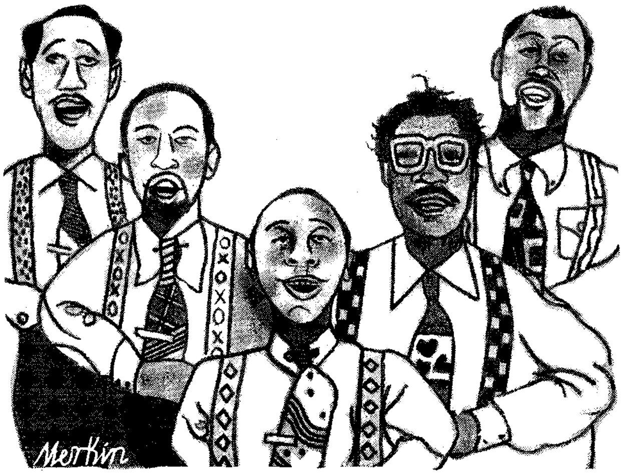

Jeffrey D. Sams, Kevin Ramsey, Glenn Turner, Milton Craig Nealy, and Doug Eskew in "Five Guys Named Moe"

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

THE BEST OF FORBIDDEN BROADWAY—A tenth-anniversary edition of Gerard Alessandrini's show, featuring both past highlights and new material. Previews through April 5. Opens April 6 at 7. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

BLUE HILL TROUPE—Presenting benefit performances of Gilbert and Sullivan's RUDDYGORE. Opens March 30 at 8, and runs through April 4. (John Jay College Theatre, 899 Tenth Ave., at 58th St. For information about tickets, call 879-3135.)

THE END OF THE DAY—A new play by Jon Robin Baitz, the author of "The Substance of Fire." Previews through April 6. Opens April 7 at 8. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

FIVE GUYS NAMED MOE—Six singers and dancers—Jerry Dixon, Doug Eskew, Milton Craig Nealy, Kevin Ramsey, Jeffrey D. Sams, and Glenn Turner—star in a celebration of the music of Louis Jordan. Written by Clarke Peters, this show originated in London, where it is still playing the West End. Previews through April 7. Opens April 8 at 7. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

GUYS AND DOLLS—Jerry Zaks has directed this new production of the 1950 musical by Frank Loesser (score and lyrics) and Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows (book). (It was based on a Damon Runyon story.) Peter Gallagher, Nathan Lane, and Faith Prince head a forty-member company. In previews. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

HAMLET—Stephen Lang has the title role and Elizabeth McGovern is Ophelia in this Roundabout Theatre Company production. Paul Weidner directed. Previews March 31-April 1. Opens April 2 at 8. (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

JELLY'S LAST JAM—Gregory Hines has the lead in a new musical about Jelly Roll Morton. George C. Wolfe directed and authored the book. In previews. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

LYPSINKA! A DAY IN THE LIFE—A new show written and performed by John Epperson. Presented by New York Theatre Workshop. Opens March 31 at 8. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 302-6989.)

MAN OF LA MANCHA—A twenty-fifth-anniversary production of the musical, starring Raul Julia and Sheena Easton. In previews. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

METRO—A musical import from Warsaw, which features a cast of forty-one dancers and singers. Janusz Stoklosa composed the score. Mary Bracken Phillips has provided English-language lyrics and book (in collaboration with Janusz Jozefowicz) for this production. In previews. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

ONE OF THE ALL-TIME GREATS—A black comedy by the actor Charles Grodin. Previews begin April 1. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

RED DIAPER BABY—A one-man comedy written and performed by Josh Kornbluth and directed by Joshua Mostel. Preview on March 31. Opens April 1 at 8. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

RUTHLESS!—A musical comedy about a child star, who is played by Tina Denmark. The book and lyrics are by Joel Paley and the music is by Marvin Laird. In previews. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

A SMALL FAMILY BUSINESS—The American première of a play by Alan Ayckbourn. The cast includes Brian Murray, Jane Carr, Caroline Lagerfelt, and Anthony Heald. Lynne Meadow directed. In previews. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE—A revival of Tennessee Williams' classic 1947 play. Jessica Lange is Blanche, Alec Baldwin is Stanley, Amy Madigan is Stella, and Timothy Carhart is Mitch. Directed by Gregory Mosher. In previews. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

'TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE—Val Kilmer and Jeanne Tripplehorn in a production of John Ford's Jacobean tragedy, which JoAnne Akalaitis directed. Previews through April 4. Opens April 5 at 7, and runs through April 19. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

TWO TRAINS RUNNING—August Wilson's new play, directed by Lloyd Richards. Larry Fishburne and Roscoe Lee Browne lead the cast. Previews begin April 7. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

NEW THIS SEASON

THE BELLS; OR, THE POLISH JEW—Everett Quinton has adapted an adaptation of a hundred-and-twenty-year-old "dramatic study." He also plays all the roles. Eureka directed. (Charles Ludlam, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

CATSKILLS ON BROADWAY—A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. Freddie Roman and Mal Z. Lawrence are the Jewish comedians; Dick Capri handles the Italians. The jokes explode around us, and there isn't a dud in the lot. Marilyn Michaels, the fourth member of the company, does imitations of imitations. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/23/91.) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

CHEKHOV VERY FUNNY—The Pearl Theatre Company winds up its season with four short comedies by Chekhov. (125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708.)

CHESS—Tim Rice has revised the book and lyrics for this revival of the musical, which has a score by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus. (Master, Riverside Dr. at 103rd St. 663-8893.)

CONVERSATIONS WITH MY FATHER—Judd Hirsch, David Margulies, and Tony Shalhoub in a new play by Herb Gardner. Daniel Sullivan directed. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

CRAZY FOR YOU—Lightly based on "Girl Crazy," which opened in 1930, this glorious show is actually a celebration of the music of George Gershwin and the lyrics of his brother Ira—nineteen songs in all—and also of the witty, imaginative choreography of Susan Stroman. Ken Ludwig wrote the lively book. Harry Groener and Jodi Benson are the lead actor/dancers. The scenery is by Robin Wagner; the costumes are by William Ivey Long; and the masterly direction is by Mike Ockrent. Bless 'em all. (3/2/92) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DANCING AT LUGHNASA—How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the memory play from Hell. (11/4/91) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

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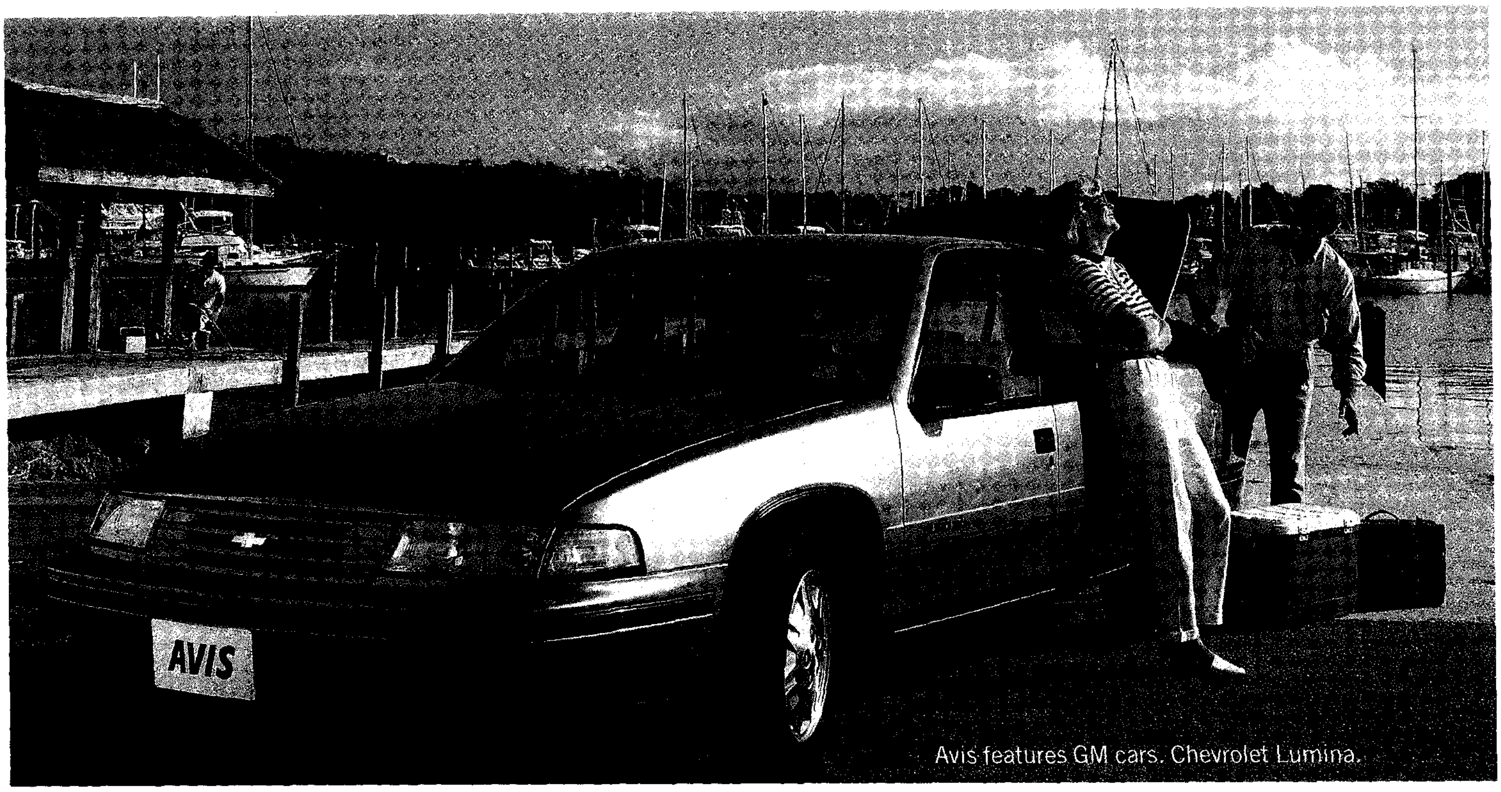

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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

Death and the Maiden—Mike Nichols' Americanized version of Ariel Dorfman's play (in which Juliet Stevenson took London by storm last year) is a sad disappointment. The play, which is set in "a country that is probably Chile" and concerns a woman's attempt to punish the man she holds responsible for torturing her in captivity fifteen years before, is anything but subtle, and Glenn Close, Richard Dreyfuss, and Gene Hackman are all grossly miscast. (3/30/92) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099.)

Four Baboons Adoring the Sun—John Guare's play about a man and wife who invite the children of their former marriages to join them at an archeological dig in Sicily may have its flaws, but dullness is not one of them. Stockard Channing and James Naughton are fine in the leading roles (and so is everyone else aboard). Tony Walton's settings are truly marvellous, as lighted by Richard Pilbrow, and the action is lively, beginning to end. Peter Hall directed. (3/30/92) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes April 19.)

From the Mississippi Delta—In eleven scenes, Endesha Ida Mae Holland dramatizes her own rise (and journey) from the Delta (where she had been a teen-age prostitute) to the University of Minnesota and triumph in academia. The leading character, though, is her mother, a midwife called Aint Baby, who is very well portrayed by Cheryl Lynn Bruce. The role of the author is split between Ms. Bruce, Sybil Walker, and Jacqueline Williams, and the result is a lively and merry evening. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Grandchild of Kings—Under Eugene Lee's direction, Harold Prince's enthralling adaptation of the first two volumes of Sean O'Casey's memoirs is set—beautifully—in a square in Dublin. The performances, all of them satisfying, are by the members of the Irish Repertory Theatre Company: Padraic Moyles, Patrick Fitzgerald, and Chris O'Neill are Sean as child, young man, and old man, and the invaluable Pauline Flanagan is Sean's mother. Traditional Irish songs and dances accompany the action every inch of the way. (2/24/92) (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 477-7900.)

Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother—An adaptation of a novella by Gabriel García Márquez; directed by Jorge Alí Triana. Performed in Spanish; simultaneous-English-translation sets are available. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850.)

Jake's Women—Alan Alda stars in a new play by Neil Simon, which Gene Saks directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Julie Halston's Lifetime of Comedy—For up-to-the-minute coverage of what it is like to be "divorced, over thirty, hormonally imbalanced," you can't do better than the wit and wisdom of this multitalented actress-comedienne-sage. She's a little like Joan Rivers, a little like Joan Collins, and a little like St. Joan. Also a little like ZaSu Pitts. Among our favorite moments in this autobiographical show are the story of events leading up to Miss Halston's tragic divorce, the visit to the breast doctor, and the ritual reading and textual analysis of the *Times* wedding announcements. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

The Lady from Havana—An encore presentation of a play by Luis Santeiro about a Cuban family in Miami. Three performances a week are in English; three are in Spanish. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 869-3530.)

Marvin's Room—A play about dying, suffering, and sacrifice in one family, written in a style so frisky as to set the teeth permanently on edge. There is a fine performance by Mark Rosenthal as a smoldering young man. Also with Alice Drummond, Laura Esterman, and Tim Monsion. Scott McPherson is the dramatist, David Petrarca the director. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

The Master Builder—The National Actors Theatre production of Ibsen's play. With Earle Hyman, Lynn Redgrave, Maryann Plunkett, Madeleine Potter, and others. Tony Randall directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Most Happy Fella—This is one musical we think the world could be without and feel no sorrow. The story of a girl forced to content herself with some old duffer because some other old duffer wanted to teach everyone a lesson about making do with what life has to offer, it's pseudo opera superimposed on pseudo Americana. As for Gerald Gutierrez's Goodspeed Opera production, it's your basic slightly-better-than-average dinner-theatre revival. What's the rumpus? (2/24/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Oxcart—The Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary with a revival of Rene Marqués's drama, which was the company's first production, in 1967. Three performances a week are in English; four are in Spanish. (304 W. 47th St. 354-1293.)

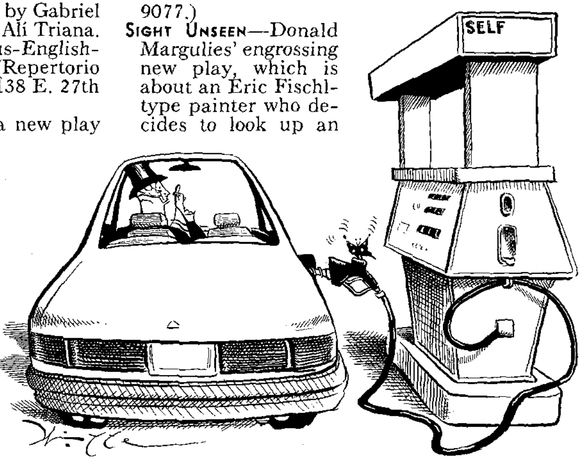
The Real Live Brady Bunch—Episodes from the acclaimed TV series, reënacted by the Annoyance Theatre, of Chicago. Something called "The Real Live Game Show" comes first. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Return to the Forbidden Planet—This light-minded entertainment is a patchwork of beloved pop songs stitched together with Shakespeareana. The show, however, has almost nothing to do with the cult movie it is based on, and still less to do with "The Tempest." Written and directed by Bob Carlton, it is more than anything else an occasion to laugh a bit and rock out a lot. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Search and Destroy—A labored and heavily ironic play about a young man who reads an inspirational self-help book and resolves to make a movie of it; his quest for the requisite cash, which causes him to sink deeper and deeper into corruption, makes up the plot. All in all, it's an exhausting evening, but the performances, under David Chambers' direction, are good. With Griffin Dunne, as the hapless fellow, and Stephen McHattie and Keith Szarabajka, among others. (3/9/92) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Closes April 5.)

Shmulnik's Waltz—Allan Knee's comedy, with music by David Shire. Seen earlier this season at the Jewish Rep. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 967-9077.)

Sight Unseen—Donald Margulies' engrossing new play, which is about an Eric Fischl-type painter who decides to look up an old girlfriend he once treated badly, takes the contemporary art scene to task. Technically, it also plays around with time a good deal, though never sloppily or gratuitously. You end up being affected by a curious kind of resonance—it's earned, not something you've brought with you into the theatre. (2/3/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)



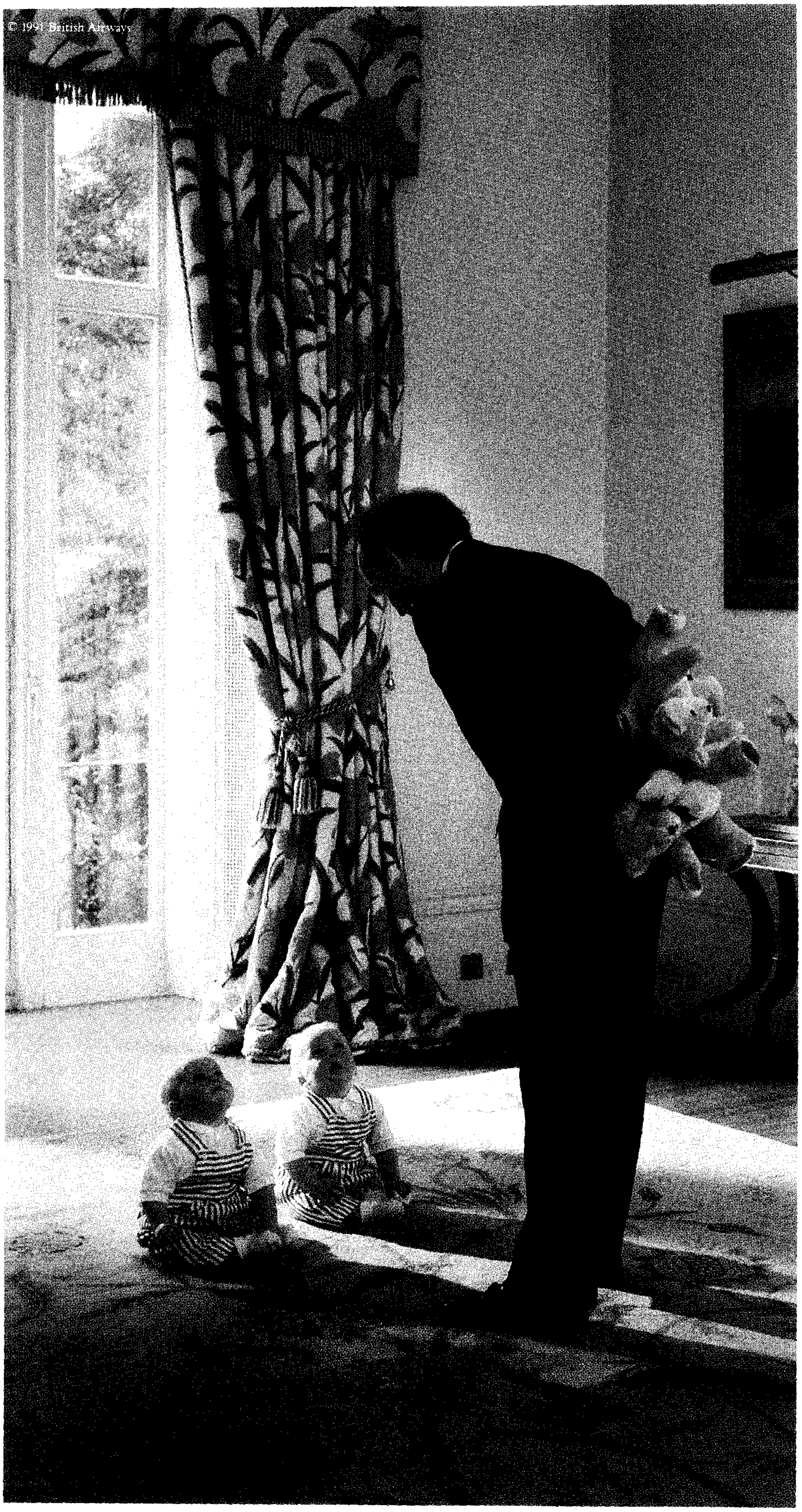
The Substance of Fire—Jon Robin Baitz's play about an intransigent publisher at odds with his grown children, having moved from Playwrights Horizons, seems stronger than ever in this more formal theatre. The remarkable Ron Rifkin continues in the leading role, and he is ably supported by the members of the original company—Patrick Breen, Maria Tucci, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Jon Tenney. (3/9/92) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Virgin Molly—A play by Quincy Long. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-8755. Closes April 12.)

York Theatre Company—Presenting a revival of **little me**, the 1962 musical comedy by Cy Coleman (score), Carolyn Leigh (lyrics), and Neil Simon (book). With Jo Ann Cunningham, Stephen Joseph, Denise LeDonne, Michael O'Steen, and others. (2 E. 90th St. 534-5366.)

LONG RUNS

breaking legs: The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia play a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tillinger directed it. With Larry Storch, Karen Valentine, Ronald Maccone, and Nick Wyman. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.). . . **cats:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.). . . **the fantasticks:** The longest-running long run turns thirty-two in May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.). . . **forever plaid:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.). . . **grand hotel:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.). . . **lips together, teeth apart:** Two couples share a beach house on Fire Island over the Fourth of July weekend, in Terrence McNally's very funny play about a number of serious matters. With Christine Baranski, Joanne Camp, Jonathan Hadary, and Brian Kerwin; directed by John Tillinger. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.). . . **lost in yonkers:** There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.). . . **les misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.). . . **miss saigon:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.). . . **nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.). . . **pageant:** A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.). . . **the phantom of the opera:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **the secret garden:** This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **song of singapore:** A musical with a promising concept: turn a Polish veterans' hall into a Singapore night club, circa 1941, and spill murder and mayhem onto the premises. Unfortunately, the lavish settings (by John Lee Beatty) and the musical talent cannot conceal a very thin story and a host of excruciatingly bad jokes. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.). . . **the will rogers follies:** The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)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DANCE

WE'RE not in the habit of looking to the circus for our anthropology lessons, but these days even the big top seems a simulacrum of the global village. Several Mongolian wrestlers are travelling with the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus this year, and, backstage after a recent performance, a couple of their compatriots told us that wrestling is a big Mongolian pastime. In Mongolia, they said, the competitions have no time limit or weight categories, the arena has no fixed boundaries, and a contest—which can involve up to sixteen pairs of opponents, wrestling simultaneously—can last more than fifteen hours. The wrestlers wear *gutul*, a special pair of boots that have thick platform soles that curl up at the toe; the front of the boot is also reinforced, so an athlete can put his full weight on it and seem to hover off the ground.

And guess what? The wrestlers have their own special dance, which features the hovering idea. When we first saw it, we thought we were dreaming. What you see is a big, beefy man start to run, his arms extended, his elbows slightly raised. He looks, improbably, like a bird in flight. (He is meant to resemble an eagle, an emblem of strength.) And there is something unusual about the run itself. It is excruciatingly slow, and yet the runner's legs are pumping as hard as if he were sprinting. Furthermore, each step concludes with a slight, retarding hover, which adds to the sense of weightlessness. That is, you see a human being, unaided, produce the effect of the slow-motion footrace sequences in "Chariots of Fire." It's hard to imagine a more persuasive dance idea of strength.

The wrestlers are only a small part of the Ringling Brothers' Mongolian offering. Also performing are experienced members of the State Folk Dance Company, several beatific contortionists, acrobats trained in the Mongolian State Circus School, a strong man, and, from neighboring Kazakhstan, five small-faced and sinewy Akhal Tickinets—the Fred Astaire of horses. Early in the show, some of the Mongolians join the American circus folk in a little tribute to rock and roll, during which everyone prances around in a Chuck Berry sort of number. We asked a representative of Barnum's whether the Mongolians had trouble learning that section. She said, "Not only did they *not* have trouble, but the dance captain says that they do it better than anyone else."

Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus—The hundred-and-twenty-second version of The Greatest Show on Earth. (Madison Square Garden. Through May 3. For information about show times and tickets, call 465-6000.)

Mark Morris Dance Group—Opening performances of a two-week engagement that will run through April 18. April 7-8 at 8: A new, unnamed work (première), "A Lake" (New York première), "Prelude and Prelude," "10 Suggestions," "Polka" (première), and "Gloria." (Manhattan Center Grand Ballroom, 311 W. 34th St. For tickets, call 307-4100.)

Mark Morris

ZeroMoving Dance Company—A Philadelphia-based troupe in a one-week engagement. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. March 31-April 4 at 8 and April 5 at 2 and 7:30.)

Solomons Company/Dance—In the première of "Pulp." (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. April 2-5 at 8. For reservations, call 529-2318.)

Juilliard Dance Ensemble—Presenting works by Doris Humphrey, Pilobolus, and Alwin Nikolais, as well as a première by Benjamin Harkarvy. (Juilliard Theatre, 60 Lincoln Center Plaza. 769-7406. April 3-4 and April 6 at 8, and April 5 at 3.)

Dances . . . Patrelle—With guest artist Cynthia Gregory. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. April 3-4 at 8 and April 5 at 3. Through April 11.)

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company—Opening performances of a week-long engagement that will run through April 12. The program consists of the première of "Waiting for the Sunrise" and of "American Gesture," plus "Sinfonia Concertante." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. April 7 at 7:30, and April 8 at 8.)

Lado—The Croatian national song-and-dance ensemble. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. April 8-9 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

"THIS ain't no Mudd Club, no CBGB," sang David Byrne at CBGB the other night. The occasion was a semi-exclusive viewing of the artist, pegged to the release of his new solo album, "Uh-Oh." The reference to CB's comes, of course, from an old Talking Heads song, but how could he resist throwing it in? Earlier in the set, Mr. Byrne had looked out into the packed house and said, "You're a strange audience," which might have meant "Wake up," and which was followed, after each subsequent song, by a noticeable jump on the applause meter. Mr. Byrne, looking rather stark in jeans, black T-shirt, and black lightweight jacket, performed solo on an acoustic guitar, though he was considerably aided by a computer-controlled tape player. This taped accompaniment was so carefully choreographed that, if you closed your eyes, you might have thought you were hearing a real band. (Mr. Byrne begins a world tour in late April, with an expanded ensemble.)

We've always had mixed feelings about David Byrne. While we admire his talent, his prolificacy, and his singular voice (in both senses), his work has sometimes struck us as a bit long on irony and short on warmth—kind of, well, extraterrestrial. That said, one of the things we like best about him is his ability to assimilate styles from outside of his shopping-mall-and-Pizza-Hut homeland, and his latest record crackles with Latin-American rhythms (three percussionists are listed), syncopated horn lines, and all sorts of odd, pleasing touches. The arrangements are deft, too, so that the Latin elements don't dominate as completely as they did on "Rei Momo," his previous solo work. At CB's, Mr. Byrne ran through most of the album, as well as a few earlier songs and a cover or two. His singing was strong, his manner energetic and precise. Before launching into a second encore, as he punched a code into his computer keyboard, he said, "Now it's really getting mysterious." But we're pretty sure he knew exactly what he was doing.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**MARY CLEERE HARAN** recently began a month-long engagement in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Haran will be presenting a new program, one that includes a segment devoted to songs by Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke. Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek, green-walled room with brass railings and mounted O'Keeffian animal skulls. Look closer and you'll find that the skulls are wearing earrings. After the show, be sure and check out the adjoining restaurant/tapas bar, which looks like the indoor food market of your dreams, and features a mural filled with people resembling Bob, Carol, Ted, and Alice. **DAVE FRISHBERG** is in residence through April 5. There are two, sometimes overlapping, schools of thought on Frishberg the songwriter, one likening him to Sondheim for his craftsmanship, the other dubbing him a latter-day Porter for his sharp social commentary. Some of his tunes—"Peel Me a Grape," "My Attorney Bernie"—have long been hip cabaret standards. Frishberg's pianistic skills aren't to be overlooked, either; he began his career as a pianist, and over the years has worked with a long list of jazz notables. **KAREN AKERS** gets under way on April 7. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen. Closed Mondays.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? **MAYNARD FERGUSON** and his outfit are in swing March 31-April 5. **JOE WILLIAMS,** with Norman Simmons, and the **FRANK WESS** big band share a bill beginning April 7. Music from nine.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Every so often, this big, airy folk-and-rock club offers a show called "In Their Own Words: A Bunch of Songwriters Sitting Around Singing." The evening, hosted by K-ROCK d.j. Vin Scelsa, is what it's advertised as. Songwriters, often quite accomplished ones, accompanied by nothing but an acoustic guitar or a piano, play a few of their tunes and hold forth on life in the business. Sometimes, the evening becomes an unintended Battle of the One-Man (or Woman) Bands. The next edition will be April 2 (at seven-thirty and ten-thirty), featuring **MICHELLE SHOCKED, PAUL KELLY, ALLEN TOUSSAINT,** and **JIMMIE DALE GILMORE. LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III** appears April 3-4. Shows are normally at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Next door, there's a bustling, garishly lit market. Within the narrow walls of this venerable piano-and-bass preserve, however, everything is easy on the eyes and ears. BENNY GREEN and CHRISTIAN MC BRIDE perform through April 4. Music from ten. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is presently home to actress-singer DIXIE CARTER. Carter, who's best known for playing an interior decorator on the TV series "Designing Women," is singing serious and silly numbers by Porter, Berlin, and John Wallowitch, among others. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, BARBARA CARROLL presides at the piano. Carroll's sets, which are usually equal parts jazz and cabaret, include songs by Gershwin, Porter, Harold Arlen, Dizzy Gillespie, and Billy Strayhorn, along with some of her own originals. Her vocals can be on the thin side, but her piano playing is always breezy and cool. Music from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—In the late seventies and early eighties, this dark cave (graffitied walls, a battered pool table, rest rooms for the intrepid only) was the hub of a thriving punk-music scene—Blondie, Talking Heads, the Ramones, and Television were regular attractions. Other clubs of the era have fizzled since then, but CB's perseveres, and young hopefuls continue to fill the stage nightly. Show times vary.

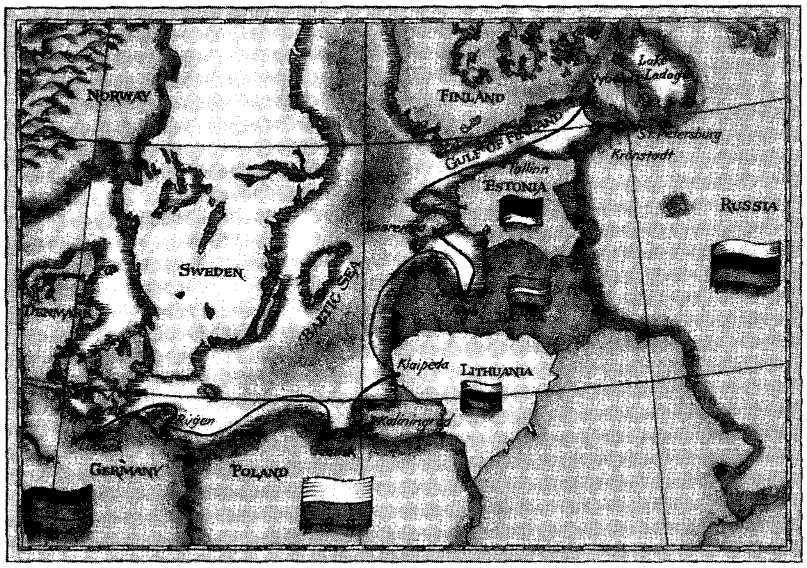
Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. Flutist DAVE VALENTIN will be performing here through April 5, and the MICHAEL MORIARTY quintet will begin work on April 7. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor LES PAUL, the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Jewel Box Lounge, 323 W. 44th St. (262-3333)—An intimate, glittery cabaret whose name describes it perfectly. The crown jewel here just now is BUD E. LUV, a Vegas-style crooner with some big rings of his own, as well as a pompadour and a winning collection of smoking jackets. Mr. Luv takes his name from a character in Jerry Lewis's "The Nutty Professor," though the latter-day Luv is in a more lighthearted vein than the Lewis character, which was a caustic sendup of Dean Martin. This Mr. Luv has dead aim, and he pulls off a feat: he wrings laughs from a concept you may have thought was exhausted. Shows Tuesdays through Fridays at ten, Saturdays at nine and midnight, and Sundays at nine.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. The musicians set up in the dining room, a clubby-looking space with leather banquettes and well-preserved collectibles: Sunday *Herald Tribune* covers, First World War posters, Hirschfeld cartoons. Up front, at the bar, you can keep your eye on the musicians, the conversationalists, and sidewalk life. Pianist RONNY WHYTE and bassist FRANK TATE move in for five days beginning on April 7. Music from about nine-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A frat house for the avant-garde. In some ways, the Knitting Factory doesn't really belong in New York: the cover charge is too reasonable, the management is too laid back, the audiences are too polite. It's a slice of post-collegiate counterculture that somehow landed on Houston Street. The TELEVISION PERSONALITIES are here on April 4. The London-based group, led by singer-songwriter Dan Treacy, has been around since the late seventies, but, due to either financial reasons or inertia, has never played in the U.S. before. Treacy sets incisive pop-culture satire to breezy, bubble-gum melodies, and his topics have ranged from punk poseurs to David Hockney. In Europe, the TVP's are cult heroes; in the U.S., they're the cult hero's cult heroes. Also playing is the MAD SCENE, a New York-based pop group, who convinced the TVP's to hop the pond. Also on this week's schedule: the Styrenes and Love Child on April 1; SAMM BENNETT & CHUNK on April 2; Luna, with Dean Wareham and Justin Harwood, on April 3;

Celebrate the First Spring of Freedom in Russia and the Baltics



Years ago, we could only have dreamed of pioneering an in-depth exploration of Russia and the Baltics. Beginning May 29, no more than 80 guests will be afforded the rare opportunity to witness history-in-the-making firsthand. To walk in the land of the Czars. To delve into a world cloaked to outside eyes for decades. As Special Expeditions embarks on an historic fifteen-day journey between St. Petersburg and Lubeck. Traveling from forbidden city to medieval port in the company of esteemed historians Dr. Mark Cioc and Dr. Ronald Grigor Suny.

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and Fish and Roses, as well as the Borah Bergman & Thomas Chapin Duo, on April 5. Music after nine.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A bright spot on the little-heralded Upper East Side club scene. Don't go expecting to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. **BOBBY RADCLIFF** is in action on April 2; **BO DIDDLEY, JR.,** and the Black Widow Band claim April 3-4. Sets from nine-fifteen, except Sundays, when they begin at eight-forty-five.

Marquee, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club, just off the West Side Highway, that is one of the city's main venues for college-radio fare. **CHRIS WHITLEY** and **TOAD THE WET SPROCKET** share a bill on March 31. Whitley, a Texas blues-rocker who combines commercial appeal, an authentic roots sound, and edgy, literate lyrics, is the headliner, but the opening act is a good reason to show up early. Toad the Wet Sprocket deserves a place at the forefront of the international brigade of young guitar-based rockers fighting to emerge from the shadow of R.E.M., U2, and the Smiths. Their powerful new album, "Fear," could have been recorded in Athens or Manchester or Glasgow or even Seattle, but, as it turns out, Toad is a quartet of fresh-faced young fellows from Santa Barbara. Go figure. **L7** performs on April 1; **MR. BUNGLE** and **GROTUS** come in on April 2; and the **RADIATORS** appear April 3-4.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—The legends of Hoboken are many. Some of the legends are true: Sinatra did grow up here; in certain parts of the town, the air does smell of Maxwell House coffee. Some of the legends are iffy: Was the first game of baseball really played here? Does former Hüsker Dü chieftain Bob Mould actually live in Hoboken? (John Sayles, maybe, but *Bob Mould*?) At Maxwell's, you won't find all the answers, but you will find bands, bands, and more bands. Sometimes you'll find as many as five a night. April 2 belongs to **SUPERCHUNK** and Girls Against Boys; **PETER BLEGVAD** claims April 3; the **JUDYBATS** and **PALE-FACE** perform on April 4; and **FUGAZI** holds forth on April 7 (see Jazz/Pop/Rock Listings). Dining.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steak house, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Jazz Society, Tuesdays and Fridays to **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS,** Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. The Wednesday lineup varies: on April 1 you can hear Bob Litwak's group (with trumpeter Red Rodney and tenor-sax player Eric Potter), as well as an outfit led by Dale Chandler; two big bands—one led by Jack Twomey, the other by David Allyn—will play on April 8. Show times vary.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Known for, among countless other things, a scene in "Manhattan" in which Woody Allen tries to teach his young son how to "score." Upstairs, there's a small, red-gold-and-green cabaret. **STILLER AND MEARA** work out on April 5. Shows Sundays at eight and, upon demand, ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—The closest thing in Manhattan to a rain forest, this venerable club has many selling points: tropical drinks, Brazilian food, faux palm trees, a thatch-roofed bar. The live music is primarily from Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean, and the dance floor is usually hopping. **BOBBY CALDWELL** holds forth April 7-8. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Space at Chase, 98 Third Ave., at 12th St. (475-1407)—One of those East Village joints where, for a few bucks, you can hear a handful of local rock bands. As is usually the case at these establishments, some of the bands will make you want to cower under the pinball machine while others will make you want to dance and shout and start your own independent label. Music from nine-thirty, except on Tuesdays, when it starts at seven.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—If you arrive late for a show at this celebrated shrine of jazz, you run the risk of being seated in the glass-enclosed terrace, which means you'll need a periscope to see the show. Otherwise, Sweet Basil is just the right environment for patrons—chiefly because it has a silence-or-else policy during shows. Not so long ago, pianist **TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI** was leading a big band and was a regular staple of New York's night life. The breezy Bud Powell devotee is now seldom seen in these parts, but she's leading a quintet here through April 5. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Superchunk at Maxwell's

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Thanks to low lighting, muralled pillars, ironwork, and a beautifully restored old tin ceiling, this loft space manages to feel homey. **THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH,** which will be here on April 3, is led by former Housemartins Paul Heaton and Dave Hemingway. The group has just put out its third album, a memorable excursion in airy, post-Smiths pop. **MATTHEW SWEET** comes in on April 4. Sweet recently released a terrific record, titled "Girlfriend." Everything about the album seems just right, especially the C.S.N.-style harmonies that light up the singer's simple, sturdy pop songs. In concert, Sweet covers numbers by Graham Parsons and Neil Young; here he'll be backed up by guitarist Ivan Julian and others. Sets at eight and eleven weeknights, eight-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, slice-of-pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia. A trio belonging to pianist **MC COY TYNER** holds forth until April 5. Tyner's outfit puts on an extraordinary show, during which his own playing alternates seamlessly from the thunderous and showy to the lyrical and understated. The **BRANFORD MARSALIS** trio starts up on April 7. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Music after nine-thirty.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy, awninged eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and always wondered about. This one turns out to be a rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were *no* music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. The **CECIL BRIDGEWATER** trio entertains through April 4; the **BENNY GREENE** duo, which is appearing with vocalist Deborah Davis, shows up on April 5; and **KIRK LIGHTSEY** and **CECIL MC BEE** begin work on April 6. Music from eight.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

"Brave Smiles. . . Another Lesbian Tragedy"—With Maureen Angelos, Babs Davy, Dominique Dibbell, Peg Healy, and Lisa Kron. (Downtown Art Co., 64 E. 4th St. April 2-4 at 8 and April 5 at 5. 732-1227.)

Amy Sue Rosen and Derek Bernstein—In "Discipledom," a performance piece that portrays rabbis on ladders. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. April 2-4 at 8:30 and April 5 at 3.)

"Brace Up!"—A production by the Wooster Group, which includes text from "The Three Sisters," by Chekhov. With Kate Valk, Peyton Smith, Ron Vawter, Anna Kohler, and Jeff Webster. Also with video and musical segments. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. April 3-5 at 8. Through April 19.)

P.S. 122—April 2-5 at 8: Richard Elovich in "Someone Else from Queens is Queer." Directed by Itamar Kubovy. Through April 12. . . . ¶ April 2-5 at 9: Ellen Fisher in "Figurines" and "The Circle Game." (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

ART

TINA CHOW, who died in January, of AIDS, was a connoisseur and an extreme aesthete, not a clotheshorse. Her spectacular collection of fashion—bequeathed in part to the Fashion Institute of Technology and in part to the Kyoto Costume Institute—spans the twentieth century. Though it centers on some of the most rarefied objects ever to emerge from the cocoon of modern couture, it also includes such vernacular items as a thin white Chinese-cotton T-shirt. Chow was especially drawn to clothes with a subtle whiff of the trade winds about them, like a Balenciaga coat with a kimono-like, neck-elongating, thrown-back and rolled collar, or Fortuny's evocations of Byzantium and ancient Greece. Her rarest specimens—Dior's Watteau-inspired, draped evening wrap, for example, made from a grand and unbroken length of ice-blue satin—are without doubt among the most perfect creations in the history of the decorative arts.

The final mannequin in "Flair: Fashion Collected by Tina Chow," an exhibit now on view at F.I.T. (227 West 27th Street; through May 9), is outfitted in a rigorously tailored black jacket, that perfect T-shirt, an uncommonly graceful pair of black leather jodhpurs (designed by Kenzo in 1976), and a large, plain, but imposing crystal-and-bamboo pendant of Chow's own design, hanging where von Stroheim might have slung his monocle. The outfit will send a jolt of recognition through anyone who knew Chow, even if only slightly—perhaps as the chatelaine of her husband's restaurants in New York, London, and Los Angeles. It represents Chow's signature look. (She had the jodhpurs copied again and again, for instance, in different materials.) In life, the silhouette was animated by an Etonian haircut and a pale, immaculately scrubbed face, whose delicate features could have been the model for the fairy-tale foxes in Kurasawa's "Dreams." And, when she wore the exceptionally beautiful gossamer evening dress (circa 1976) by the English designer Zandra Rhodes, which is also on view here, Chow must have looked like a contemporary vision of Camille.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A retrospective of black-and-white and color photographs by Helen Levitt. Starts April 1. . . . ¶ Barbizon, in the Forest of Fontainebleau, was a meeting place and inspiration for several French landscape painters in the eighteen-fifties and sixties. A large sampling of works by these artists—Théodore Rousseau, Jean-François Millet, Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, and others—is on view. Through May 10. . . . ¶ Fifty works by William Harnett (1848-92), the Irish-American painter who was the father of the trompe-l'oeil school. Through June 14. . . . ¶ The recent donation of the Perls collection—a hundred and sixty-three objects from the kingdom of Benin—has substantially redefined the museum's African holdings. This exhibition of the collection is a welcome relief from the rigid theatre of many of the museum's blockbusters: it enables viewers to make their own discoveries. . . . ¶ "American Rococo, 1750-1775." Furniture, silver, paintings, engravings, ceramics, and glass made in pre-Revolutionary America. Through May 17. . . . ¶ "The Lotus Transcendent." The Eilenberg collection, from which this show has been selected, is not particularly comprehensive nor focussed on grand masterpieces, but it does sparkle in many unexpected ways. For instance, it includes a group of bronze sculptures from Indonesia that many consider to be the finest privately assembled collection of such material in the world. Through June 28. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"The Paley Collection." While no museum in its right mind would turn down a bequest that included Picasso's "Boy Leading a Horse" (1905-06) or his "Nude with Joined Hands" (1906), or the handful of other Paley plums, the surprising over-all blandness of this group instills little more than a vague, mildly contemptuous sense of familiarity. Only the Picasso "Boy" and a few other paintings seem to transcend the pasteurization of Paley's taste. The larger, Post-Impressionist part of the collection does include some charming lesser works. Derain's 1933 painting "The Rehearsal," of two actors on a murky stage, is one such oddball in this almost unrelievedly pretty assortment. And a group of small Maillol table bronzes, among the very few Paley sculptures, looks powerful. Through April 7. . . . ¶ "Allegories of Modernism: Contemporary Drawing," two hundred works by forty American and European artists. Through May 5. . . . ¶ A small show of recent photographs by Gay Block, of people who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. Through April 7. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until late spring.

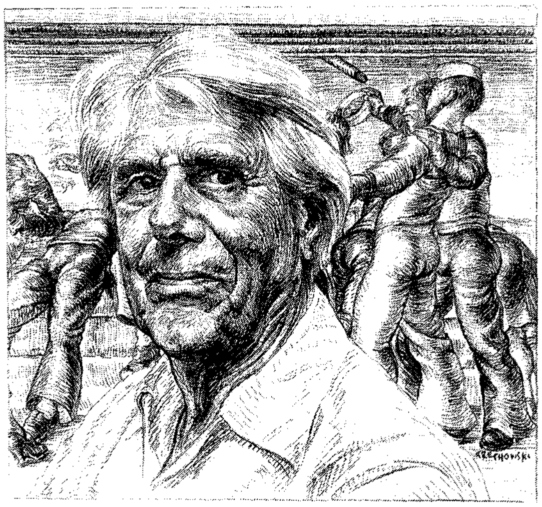
Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A retrospective of photographs by Paul Strand. Through May 17. . . . ¶ The William Wegman show includes nearly two hundred paintings, drawings, photographs, and videotapes. Through April 19. . . . ¶ A large exhibition of paintings, drawings, etchings, and woodcuts by Terry Winters. Through May 10. . . . ¶ A new series of pastel drawings by Joan Mitchell. Through June 21. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Seventy "Destructions," "Accumulations," and "Cachets" by the inimitable French Nouveau Réaliste Arman. Through April 26. . . . ¶ "The New Merengue," an installation by sculptor Houston Conwill, poet Estella Conwill Majozo, and architect Joseph De Pace. Through May 3. . . . ¶ "Contemporary Wood Sculpture" includes works by Kenji Fujita, Jane Greengold, and Louise Nevelson, among others. Through June 7. . . . ¶ "Biomorphicism and Organic Abstraction in Twentieth-Century Decorative Arts." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"The Streets of Dai Fau," a show of photographs by Arnold Genthe (1869-1946) which depict San Francisco's Chinatown before 1906. Through June 30. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—Three site-specific installations: Sam Gilliam's "Windows Go Orange (e.e. cummings)," Robert Kushner's "Paphiopelilum," and Dale Chihuly's "Niijima Floats.". . . ¶ An exhibition of African textiles woven by means of improvised techniques. Through April 19. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"The Cosmic Dancer." The tenth-century Hindu bronze of Shiva Nataraja, Lord of the Dance, reigns as the centerpiece of this exhibition of fifty bronze, stone, and wood sculptures from India and Southeast Asia. Through June 28. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)



Paul Cadmus

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St.—Joseph Beuys' early-seventies aluminum-glass-and-photo panel work titled "Arena—where would I have got if I had been intelligent!" Through June 21. . . . ¶ Six large paintings are the centerpiece of Brice Marden's show of works inspired by the Tang-dynasty poet Cold Mountain. Through May 31. . . . ¶ "Displacement," a whole floor of painted Conceptual and graphic wordplay by Lawrence Weiner. Through April 30. . . . ¶ On the roof, Dan Graham has created a fine urban park with glass walls, a floor of spongy asphalt tiles, and a squat glass cylinder at its center. The park is elevated above the roof as if it were afloat, and it is very pleasant to spend time up there, especially in the nearby coffee bar/video lounge. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Bridges and Boundaries: African Americans and American Jews." This show—comprising three hundred and fifty art works, photographs, and documents—explores the complex relationship of coöperation and tension between the two cultures. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, 11 to 8; Fridays, 11 to 3.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Walt Whitman and New York." The Long Island-born Brooklynite is celebrated in a show that juxtaposes prose and poetry with nineteenth-century paintings, prints, and photographs. . . . ¶ "Broadway! 125 Years of Musical Theatre." A large assortment of objects—including paintings, posters, scripts, models, sheet music, and memorabilia—from nearly seventy-five productions that have bowed on the Great White Way. First seen in New York at the I.B.M. Gallery last summer. . . . ¶ Fifty paintings, watercolors, and lithographs by the Dutch artist Adriaan Lubbers (1892-1954), whose fascination with New York City is reflected in his urban landscapes. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The hundred-and-sixty-seventh annual juried exhibition includes oil paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, pastels, watercolors, and an architectural drawing. Through May 10. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"1+1+1," a series of recent sculptural projects by Alfredo Jaar, primarily in the form of large-scale light-box installations. Through April 19. . . . ¶ "The Big Nothing or Le Presque Rien," a group exhibition in which each artist has been asked to contemplate the notions of emptiness and materiality. Through April 19. . . . ¶ Jeffry Mitchell's installation consists of rubber, plaster, and latex tableaux of cartoon figures, toy creatures, and other kitschy icons. Through April 19. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—A show chronicling the design, construction, and urban context of New York's City Hall (1803-1812). Forty-seven drawings, along with watercolors, prints, books, and a model, illuminate the neo-classical edifice. Through June 28. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—The Walt Whitman centenary is under way, and one of the more comprehensive celebratory exhibitions is "In Life or Death Forever": a hundred and fifty manuscripts, books, photographs, and letters culled from both the Berg and Oscar Lion collections. (Berg Exhibition Room.). . . ¶ "On the Edge" is a show of more than two hundred black-and-white and color photographs from the covers and pages of *Vogue*. Starts April 4. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall.). . . ¶ An eclectic collection of recent acquisitions from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Some of the works are by famous photographers, some are by unknowns; some are generic, some are gems. Through May 2. (Third Floor Gallery.) (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—"Africa and the Diaspora" features nearly a hundred works from the museum's collection, dating from the fifth century to the present. Through June 7. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Jörg Immendorff—A few months ago, Immendorff's unbridled neo-Dada "LIDL" works, from the sixties, were on view here. Now we find the more ideologically constrained but more pictorially vital fruits of this fascinating artist's early-seventies Maoist Party period. Several paintings in this show, and the show itself, are titled "I Wanted to Be an Artist." Immendorff's humorous, cartoonishly doctrinaire tableaux, with their brandished slogans and their strong young men and women of the people—students, of course, and workers—are social realism at its best, and they clearly anticipate the artist's famous "Café Deutschland" series. Through April 18. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

Short List—**GEORGE GROSZ,** Soufer, 1015 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (through April 30); **THEODORE ROSZAK,** Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (through April 11); **DAVID SALLE,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through April 25); **RICHARD SERRA,** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St., and Pace, 142 Greene St. (through April 25); **DONALD SULTAN,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through April 25); **PAUL WONNER,** Coe Kerr, 49 E. 82nd St. (through April 4).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Theophilus Brown—This show of new paintings is entirely focussed on the Cézannesque theme of nude bathers in open-air settings—not, traditionally, a comic genre. Yet many of Brown's bathers are quite funny. His depictions of compromising seaside positions, including a few psychologically ambiguous triangulations among these laconic figures, provide some of the jokes. In their low-key and resolutely everyday way, Brown's subjects, as usual, seem also to reverberate with the stentorian rhythms and otherworldly frissons of symbolism. But therein, too, is humor. Some of these pictures—they are most vivid, paradoxically, when most chro-

ART–Cont'd

matically subdued—seem to tweak the nose of Maurice Denis. Indeed, Brown might be a wry latter-day Bay Area Nabi. Through April 3. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

Paul Cadmus—Because of his full-blown Lawrentian fervors, the up-front homoeroticism that has long pervaded his work, and his rather Flemish, carnivalesque vision of life, the eighty-seven-year-old Cadmus remains a great oddball figure in art—the last of the Magic Realists. "The Fleet's In!," Cadmus's controversial 1934 promenade scene and satire of sailors on shore leave, from the collection of the Navy Museum, cheerfully greets gallerygoers at the door. Crowd scenes, several more of which are on display here, are what Cadmus does best. His other strong suit is the symbolist-horror genre. The theme of his suite titled "The Seven Deadly Sins" (1945-49) was evidently so satisfying to the artist that, in 1983, he appended "The Eighth Sin: Jealousy." Through April 18. (Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Saint Clair Cemin—This artist—who was born in Brazil, has lived in Paris, and now lives in New York—has a cosmopolitan aesthetic, and is a budding master of self-consciously effete sculptural hybridism. His work seems best when it is most physically flamboyant, and three pieces in this show are very good. One is a giant cast-aluminum totem brightly and evenly painted in automotive paint. Another, which will seem familiar to those aware of Cemin's earlier productions, is a bronze floor piece—a mutant thing that might be described as part walking stick, part old-fashioned baby stroller, and part griffon. The other—a powerful if amorphous white marble figure on a plinth, which was inspired by travels in Egypt—suggests a tomb-guarding bear god. Other works on view—including a pair of uncharacteristically delicate structures made with leather and string, and, leaning against a wall, a Kelly-green "guitar" that must be some sort of Picasso joke—suggest interesting new directions, though they are perhaps playing a bit too hard to get. Through April 4. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Donald Lipski—This artist works well with two qualities generally distrusted in art—humor and gregariousness. And his shows are always more refreshing and penetrating than one remembers past shows as having been. These new pieces, however, while quite clever, forsake humor for poignancy. The artist has used white candles everywhere—there are short ones in a huge steel ladle, chunky ones filling an old harp case, and a sea of tall skinny ones stuffed into the frame of a wooden bed—and they give the show an enveloping memorial character. For those more taken with the artist's endless cleverness, there is a wall of smaller objects with candles, some lit and dripping away. Through April 11. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Short List—**GIOVANNI ANSELMO,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through April 4); **WILLIAM BAILEY,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through April 25); **GEORG BASELITZ,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through April 18); **BRAD DAVIS** and **THOMAS LANIGAN-SCHMIDT,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through April 25); **ARTHUR DOVE** and **WALTER ANDERSON,** Ross, 50 W. 57th St. (through April 30); **RICHARD GERSTL** and **OSKAR KOKOSCHKA,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (through May 9); **MICHAEL GOLDBERG,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through April 18); **MARSDEN HARTLEY,** Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through April 25); **BRYAN HUNT,** Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (through April 25); **ANDRÉ MASSON,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through April 11); **ANNE POOR,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through April 4); **LUDWIG SANDER,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (through April 11); **ALBERT YORK,** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. (through April 18).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Mary Carlson—There is something creepy about this exhibition, as if the viewer were violating the artist just by glimpsing it. A number of human forms, made out of various flimsy materials—paper and fabric, for instance—are pinned limply to the wall, collapsed on the floor, or pulled taut and hung in a corner. One of them is heavily soiled, as if it had been walked on; another is ripped; and another, in the ultimate expression of suffocation, is made of plastic. These violent pieces seem saturated with self-loathing. Through April 11. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Martin Kippenberger—When it comes to post-modernist pranks, this artist pulls out all the stops. His current show is a carnival of intelligent play and thought. Beyond the forest of photographic trees, past the field of wooden pills, opposite the watchtower and the garden of inflatable rubber screens, and in front of the ejector-seat carrousel is a work that, with dastardly resignation, says it all: a dumpster loaded with trashed paintings. All the same, Kippenberger has gone to the trouble of making legitimate bronze sculptures, and they are very funny—especially the one he bent because it was too big. Through April 4. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Jim Lutes—Accomplished gestural paintings with a surrealistic edge, which suggest early Jackson Pollock. Through April 18. (Bitter-Larkin, 597 Broadway.)

David Mach—This is a troubling show that, like many other recent shows, indicates that irony may no longer be an appropriate stance in the art world. Mach, a Scottish sculptor, has quite expertly formed "African" masks and animal heads out of wooden matchsticks and then burned them to evoke ritual mortification. Hanging on the walls like trophies, the sculptures are endlessly fetishistic. They also leave the viewer wondering what the artist's point is. When viewed as kitsch, they seem to wink with irony, but when viewed straight on they unwittingly border on being racist. Through April 4. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

John McCracken—This is the first New York exhibition since 1973 by McCracken, an unfairly neglected minimalist known primarily for his leaning lacquered planks. The bright new works consist of wide standing columns and horizontal wall pieces with sharp angles cut out of them; unfortunately, most of them are disappointing. They have none of the subtlety of his planks, which are both monumental and casual. In a room by itself, however, is an extraordinary work, consisting of one green beam that spans most of two walls and the corner between them. It is a horizontal, sculptural "zip," a piece of unfinished business. The angles at either end of the work set it in motion, and give it its buoyancy, its speed, and its exhilarating line. Through April 4. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

Peter Schuyff—A massive exhibition of two hundred watercolors in which the emphasis is on basketweave, harlequin, and spirographic patterns of the sort one finds in the artist's paintings. There are also a number of works in which Schuyff has, with neoplasticist delight, painted bars and circles over reproductions of academic figure drawings from the nineteenth century. Schuyff has a fine hand and a seductive color sense, and while his paintings tend to be impersonally perfected, the watercolors are gestural, reassuringly flawed. But, for such pleasing pictures, they leave your mind much quicker than you could possibly have imagined. Through April 4. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St.)

Cary Smith—A lovely show of post-minimalist paintings. All of them could be of windows (double hung, mullioned), and what makes them so spiffy is Smith's vigorous use of color. He has an especially keen eye for the kinds of greens—dark lime, olivey mustard, tangy avocado—that tend to inspire the more exotic names on paint chips. Through April 25. (RubinSpangle, 395 West Broadway.)

Al Taylor—These masterly drawings, called "Puddles," are both witty and beautiful. The watercolor, ink, gouache, and pencil forms suggest a fluid Eva Hesse, Arp's randomness, and the touch of the calligrapher. The drawings made with white gouache on black paper are particularly "Chinese" in feel, though the artist seems as comfortable with broad swings of the arm as he is with tight gestures of the wrist. Although these are clearly a sculptor's drawings, the two sculptures of "Hanging Puddles" on view are not nearly as engaging. Through April 11. (Nolan, 560 Broadway.)

Mary Weatherford—Photo-silk-screened paintings of forests of thorny rose stems, and of a bloom or two on yucky stained surfaces. Collectively titled "I Never Promised You a Rose Garden," these works amount to a tired technique in search of an idea. Through April 18. (Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St.)

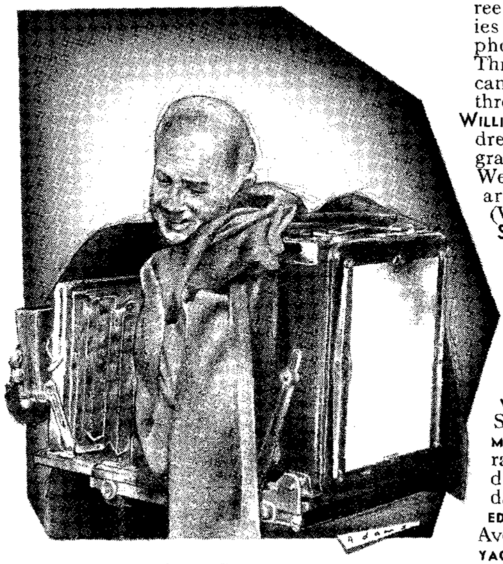
Megan Williams—Even though these exuberant works—pastels and altered books—are modest in scale, there is something grandiose in their demeanor. The pastels, which depict neo-futuristic, surrealistic exploding figures, possess a vague sexual undertone. The altered books are mostly dictionaries, either carved into the form of amphitheatres or cleanly gored through, as if shot with some pretty fat bullets. Through April 11. (Lee, 588 Broadway.)

Short List—**JAMES LEE BYARS,** Boone, 417 West Broadway (through April 25); **DORIANA CHIARINI,** Ala, 560 Broadway (through April 11); **MAUREEN CONNOR,** Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway (through April 18); **WALTER DE MARIA,** Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. (through May 9); **JIŘÍ GEORG DOKOUPIL,** Shafrazi, 130 Prince St. (through April 11); **JULIO GALÁN,** Nosei, 100 Prince St. (through April 25); **RENÉE GREEN,** Hearn, 39 Wooster St. (through May 2); **BERNARD MAISNER,** Cavin-Morris, 560 Broadway (through April 18); **CLAUDIA MATZKO,** Klagsbrun, 51 Greene St. (through April 11); **ALLAN MC COLLUM** and **MASSIMO ANTONACI,** Weber, 142 Greene St. (through April 18); **CATHERINE MURPHY,** Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway (through April 11); **JOSEPH NECHVATAL,** Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through April 4); **ANDREI ROITER,** Koury, 89 Greene St. (through April 29); **JOEL SHAPIRO,** Cooper, 149 Wooster St. (through April 11); **SUSAN SILAS,** Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through April 18).

CAVORTING

The Central Park Conservancy is in the final stages of refurbishing three Park playgrounds. One of them, at 97th Street, near Central Park West, has been reconfigured so that parents and babysitters can sit in the middle, isolated from traffic (a high fence runs along the outer edge of the park and keeps the children in). A wood-and-steel pergola supported by emerald-green columns is under construction in the playground's center. It will be covered in wisteria and will shade six benches, three of which will face the children's play equipment and three of which will face away from it. In response to parents' requests, the play area has been subdivided into discrete sections, so that toddlers can play out of the older children's way. A similar division has been made in a playground at 86th Street (also near Central Park West), where a fenced-off toddlers' area has been added. A playground at the Harlem Meer, near 108th Street, which is for toddlers only, will get some thirty new shrubs and ten new flowering trees. The Meer playground also has all new play equipment, including a bright green-and-red climbing structure with a plastic-bubble window. Thick rubber mats will be placed under the equipment at all three playgrounds.

The refurbishings were undertaken only after a canvass of nearby neighborhoods. Laura Starr, chief of design for Central Park, said the landscape architects profited from the community's advice. "When you design a public space, you can't be arrogant about it," Starr said. "Frederick Law Olmsted's whole idea in designing Central Park was that people should come to use it. If you don't feel comfortable immediately when you walk in, you're not going to have that park experience."



Paul Strand

PHOTOGRAPHY

WHAT would contemporary fashion be without photography? A fashion show during collection time is the perfect place to see how inseparable the two are, and also to watch how photography feeds the celebrity status of certain models who have become as popular as movie stars. In Paris—where many of next fall and winter's prêt-à-porter collections have just been presented—we saw these supermodels being barraged by photographers, in their dressing rooms and out on the street, day and night. On one occasion, we happened to be leaving the House of Chanel at the same time as Veronica Webb, who was there being fitted for the next day's show; as the electronic doors opened, we came upon a TV crew waiting for her outside. André Leon Talley, of American *Vogue,* summed up the scene with a perfect mixture of wit and insight. "A camera crew or crowd of photographers is the fashion accessory of the nineties," he said.

And getting collection pictures is very serious business. Jammed on both sides of the runway, as well as in a special section reserved for them, newspaper and magazine photographers and television crews push and shove and shout for smiles and poses that will make the editors back home happy. An incident at Karl Lagerfeld's show captures the atmosphere best: at one point during the razzle-dazzle, a moth fluttered briefly above the end of the runway and the first several rows of spectators. It dove and frolicked, as if to say, "Look at me, too." This poetic début caught the attention of many of the photographers—but only for a few seconds. They focussed back on the fashion show almost immediately. Culture beat nature hands down.

HELEN LEVITT—A retrospective of the New York City photographs of Helen Levitt which includes eighty-five black-and-white photographs from the thirties, forties, fifties, and eighties, and color photos from the fifties to the present. Starts April 1. (Metropolitan Museum.)

PAUL STRAND (1890-1976)—A hundred and thirty-four photographs spanning the artist's career, from several early New York City studies (discovered posthumously) to his final photographs, taken in Orgeval, France. Through May 17. (Whitney Museum of American Art. Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

WILLIAM WEGMAN—A retrospective—of two hundred drawings, paintings, videos, and photographs—that offers a comprehensive view of Wegman's skills and of his perceptions of art and the world. Through April 19. (Whitney Museum of American Art.)

SHORT LIST—**MANUEL ALVAREZ BRAVO** and **STEPHEN BRIGIDI,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through April 11); **NANCY BURSON,** Baum, 588 Broadway (through April 18); **ANDREW BUSH,** Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (through April 18); **LOUISE DAHL-WOLFE,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through May 2); **PETER HUJAR,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through April 4); **RAY METZKER** and **WILLIAM EGGLESTON,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through April 4); **EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through April 26); **EDWARD WALLOWITCH,** Alexander, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through April 4); **SHIKANOSUKE YAGAKI,** Houk Friedman, 1094 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. (through April 25).

MUSIC

MONTSERRAT CABALLÉ is to give her customary New York recital of the season on April 2. We have been to several of these events over the past decade, and have heard the Spanish diva develop and refine a formula peculiarly suited to her inclinations. It usually goes something like this: the great lady enters, takes her place, rests one hand on the piano and the other on a music stand, lowers her head, and closes her eyes. When she is comfortable, her accompanist proposes an innocuous prelude. The singer opens her eyes to consult her score and murmurs the opening number—usually a *scena ed aria* from one forgotten eighteenth-century opera or another—her voice floating idly over tinkling arpeggios, the text an impressionistic haze. Then comes a group of songs, also mostly murmured, maybe in German. At the end of the first half, there is a number with a vigorous conclusion, in which Mme. Caballé tries out her full voice for a few notes (we've seen her look up and smile guilelessly when these turn out well). At the beginning of the second half: some novelties—twentieth-century works, perhaps—and some glimpses of energy and charm. At its conclusion: a set of Spanish songs. And here things really get going—the voice is buoyant and free, the rhythm has rhythm, the singer is enjoying herself and her audience. And then the real show begins, the encore period: famous opera arias, more Spanish songs, old favorites; requests shouted from the floor, banter flung from the stage; thrilling sounds, delirium all round. Seven or eight numbers is usual for this segment, and we've known it to run even longer.

Obviously, the thing to do would be to pretend you were in Barcelona and head for the theatre at nine or so. But don't even think about it; Mme. Caballé has a following, and if you don't claim your seat at eight and guard it during the singer's public warmup, someone more dedicated will be occupying it when the excitement starts.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St., 854-7799.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**LE NOZZE DI FIGARO,** with Benita Valente, Dawn Upshaw, Frederica von Stade, Jorma Hynninen, and Feruccio Furlanetto; conducted by John Keenan. (March 30 and April 2 at 8.)... **ELEKTRA,** in a new production, with Hildegard Behrens, Deborah Voigt, Leonie Rysanek, James King, and Bernd Weikl; James Levine. (March 31 and April 3 at 8.)... With Hildegard Behrens, Deborah Voigt, Mignon Dunn, James King, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; James Levine. (April 6 at 8.)... **LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST,** with Barbara Daniels, Placido Domingo, and Sherrill Milnes; Leonard Slatkin. (April 1, April 4, and April 8, all at 8.)... **BILLY BUDD,** with Graham Clark, Thomas Hampson, and James Morris; Charles Mackerras. (April 4 at 1:30 and April 7 at 8.)... **NOTE:** This year's Metropolitan Opera National Council Winners Concert will take place on April 5 at 2:45, with Charles Mackerras conducting the orchestra. (Metropolitan Opera House. The company's season will end on April 18.)

ST. PETERSBURG NATIONAL OPERA—Final performances of three classic Russian operas, with English supertitles. **PIQUE DAME** (March 31 and April 1 at 8).... **LE COQ D'OR** (April 2-3 at 8).... **BORIS GODUNOV** (April 4 at 1:30 and 8, and April 5 at 1:30). (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ROSSINI COMEDIES—Fully staged productions (in Italian, with supertitles) of two comic operas—"La Scala di Seta" and "L'Occasione fa il Ladro"—that were premièred within seven months of each other in 1812 (a year in which Rossini unveiled no fewer than five operas). Both will be conducted by Christopher Larkin (from a new critical edition), with stage direction by Johnathon Pape. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802. April 1 and April 3 at 8, and April 5 at 2:30.)

"AMADIS"—A politicized reinterpretation of Lully's 1684 *tragédie lyrique,* fully staged (in English), and set partly in modern America and partly in the Wild West. Presented by the Measured Breaths Theatre Company, which invokes the word "infotainment" to describe its project. (Gene Frankel Theatre, 24 Bond St. April 3-5 at 8. For information about tickets, call 334-8402.)

AMATO OPERA COMPANY—Final performances of "La Forza del Destino." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. April 4 at 7:30 and April 5 at 2:30.)

OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK—Presenting "I Due Foscari," Verdi's 1844 tragedy, which involves two deaths in Venice. Eve Queler conducts. (Carnegie Hall. April 5 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—At Avery Fisher Hall, André Previn conducting. March 31 at 7:30: Britten's "Sinfonia da Requiem," Prokofiev's Seventh Symphony, and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Jean-Philippe Collard).... ¶ April 2 and April 7 at 8, and April 3 at 2: An all-Beethoven program, comprising the "Coriolanus" Overture, the Fourth Symphony, and the Violin Concerto (featuring the orchestra's concertmaster, Glenn Dicterow).

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA—Yuri Temirkanov conducts Sibelius's "Finlandia," Dvořák's Symphony No. 8, and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Yefim Bronfman). (Carnegie Hall. March 31 at 8.)

CHICAGO SYMPHONY—At Carnegie Hall, Daniel Barenboim conducting. April 2 at 8: Performing Beethoven's "Leonore" Overture No. 3, Mozart's G-Major Piano Concerto (K. 453, with the conductor doubling as soloist), and Strauss's "Ein Heldenleben."... ¶ April 3 at 8: Presenting Strauss's "Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks," orchestral excerpts from Wagner's "Götterdämmerung," and John Corigliano's Symphony No. 1 (dedicated to the memory of those who have died of AIDS).... **NOTE:** Mr. Corigliano will present a pre-concert lecture, open to ticketholders, at 6:30.

MUSIC–Cont'd

Orpheus—The conductorless chamber orchestra plays Mozart's Symphony No. 34 (K. 338), Wolf's "Italian Serenade," and Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony No. 2; mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade joins the ensemble to perform Berlioz's "Les Nuits d'Été." (Carnegie Hall. April 4 at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony and the Concert Chorale of New York—Gerard Schwarz conducts the orchestra, the choir, and soloists Harolyn Blackwell (soprano), Susanne Mentzer (mezzo-soprano), John Aler (tenor), and Olaf Baer (baritone) in Bach's B-Minor Mass. (92nd Street Y. April 4 at 8.)

Tchaikovsky Chamber Orchestra—Lazar Gosman conducts works by Haydn, Mozart, Schnittke, and—appropriately—Tchaikovsky (his "Serenade for Strings"). (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. April 5 at 2. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

New Amsterdam Singers—Clara Longstreth directs sacred music by Bach and Buxtehude. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. April 5 at 2:30. For information about tickets, call 662-6523.)

Bonhoeffer Memorial—A concert honoring Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a resistance leader executed by Hitler in 1945. Christoph von Dohnányi conducts an orchestra, the New York Choral Artists, and three featured soloists: violinist Gidon Kremer, baritone Hermann Prey, and narrator Bill Moyers. The program includes Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony, Schoenberg's "A Survivor from Warsaw," Arvo Pärt's "Fratres," and excerpts from Brahms' "Ein Deutsches Requiem." (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. April 5 at 7. For information about tickets, call 722-6226.)

Israel Chamber Orchestra—Shlomo Mintz conducts Schubert's Symphony No. 5 and Odeon Partos's Concertino for Strings, and doubles as violin soloist in Mendelssohn's E-Minor Violin Concerto. A benefit concert. (Carnegie Hall. April 6 at 7:30.)

St. Thomas Choir and Concert Royal—Gerre Hancock directs Bach's "Saint Matthew Passion," with a period-instrument orchestra and an all-male roster of soloists and choristers suggesting the performance practice of the composer's time. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 757-7013. April 7 at 7:30.)

Juilliard Orchestra—Otto-Werner Mueller conducts Strauss's "Don Juan" and his Horn Concerto No. 1 (featuring Andrea Menousek), as well as Brahms' Symphony No. 4. (Avery Fisher Hall. April 8 at 8.)

New York Choral Society Chamber Singers—Penna Rose directs the twenty singers in a wide-ranging program: Bach, Brahms, Britten, Bernstein, Bobby McFerrin, and more. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. April 8 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Boston Symphony—Seiji Ozawa conducts Ives' Symphony No. 4 and Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto (featuring Gidon Kremer), as well as an arrangement by Mr. Kremer (for violin and orchestra) of music from Arthur Lourié's opera "The Blackamoor of Peter the Great." The Tanglewood Festival Chorus lends its corporate voice in the Ives. (Carnegie Hall. April 8-9 at 8.)

RECITALS

P. D. Q. Bach and Accomplices—Violinist Itzhak Perlman and cellist Yo-Yo Ma join the unabashed Professor Peter Schickele and his cohorts in a benefit musical frolic. Among the works to be sacrificed are the "Suite No. 2 for Cello All By Its Lonesome" and the "Fuga Meshuga" (for instrumental quartet and celebrity page-turners). The evening will mark Professor Schickele's début performing on the violin, an instrument he had not yet begun to study when we went to press; still, one can always hope for the best, and, in any case, it's for a good cause. Silly costumes optional. (Carnegie Hall. April 1 at 7.)

Charles Libove and Nina Lugovoy—The violinist and the pianist perform sonatas by Mozart, Copland, Dohnányi, and Alun Hoddinott (the last being a première). (Merkin Concert Hall. April 1 at 8.)

Four Nations Ensemble—The period-instrument players present eighteenth-century music from Spain (or at least music with a Spanish flavor). Guests include harpsichordist Kent Tritle (who will join his fellow-harpsichordist Andrew Appel in music by Antonio Soler) and countertenor Drew Minter (who will perform arias by Johann Adolph Hasse and Attilio Ariosti: the very pieces that, every night for twenty years, the manic-depressive King Philip V ordered sung before he would go to bed). (Friends Meeting House, 15 Rutherford Pl., between Second and Third Aves. April 1 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Hartmut Höll and Mitsuko Shirai

Chamber Players of the League/ISCM—Presenting works by Babbitt, Stockhausen, Bülent Arel, and other contemporary composers. (Miller Theatre. April 1 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Bargemusic—To celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of New York's only floating concert hall, the Barge's artistic director, violinist Ik-Hwan Bae, joins three of his colleagues to play string quartets by Haydn, Shostakovich (his Third), and Schubert (in G Major, D. 887). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. April 2 at 7:30 and April 5 at 4.)

Montserrat Caballé—The soprano is scheduled to perform works by Vivaldi, Rossini, and several Spanish composers; assisted by pianist Manuel Burgueras and m.c. Tony Randall. A benefit concert. (Alice Tully Hall. April 2 at 8.)

Paul Sperry—The tenor joins with pianist Irma Vallecillo to perform settings, by thirteen different composers, of poetry by Walt Whitman, as well as Schumann's "Liederkreis" (Op. 39). (Miller Theatre. April 2 at 8.)

Marky Mark

Michael Thompson—This horn player attained the coveted principal-horn position in London's Philharmonia Orchestra at the age of twenty-one, but left ten years later (in 1985) to seek his fortune as a soloist. In his New York recital début, he plays standards of the horn repertoire by Beethoven, Poulenc, and others, as well as more recent works by Thea Musgrave, Jean Françaix, Thomas Dunhill, and Peter Maxwell Davies. (Merkin Concert Hall. April 2 at 8.)

Mitsuko Shirai and Hartmut Höll—The mezzo-soprano and the pianist, who are a marital as well as a musical team, perform lieder by Schumann (his "Frauenliebe und Leben," seemingly inescapable this season), Brahms, Wolf, Strauss, and Schoenberg. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. April 3 at 8.)

Tokyo String Quartet—Performing quartets by Beethoven (Op. 59, No. 2) and Schubert (the "Death and the Maiden"), with a commentary from the players. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. April 4 at 7.)

Keith Jarrett—The pianist will improvise. (Avery Fisher Hall. April 4 at 8.)

Scott Kluksdahl and Florence Millet—The cellist and the pianist perform works by Beethoven, Franck, and Carter (his 1948 Cello Sonata), as well as the première of Nicolas Bacri's "Sonata Austera." (Merkin Concert Hall. April 4 at 8:30.). . . ¶ Completing the ensemble known as the Lions Gate Trio, violinist Katie Lansdale joins Mr. Kluksdahl and Ms. Millet in works by Fauré, Messiaen, Carter, Ives, and others. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. April 7 at 8.)

Fortepiano Festival—Lincoln Center continues its exhaustive attack on the Köchel catalogue of Mozart's works by presenting a large selection of the composer's rarely played keyboard compositions—dances, marches, variations, preludes, duos, and so on—in addition to better known sonatas and fantasies. The event is spread over two concerts, and will feature ten period-instrument performers: Malcolm Bilson, Maryse Carlin, Seth Carlin, Penelope Crawford, Nancy Garrett, Robert Levin, Alexei Lubimov, Steven Lubin, Zvi Meniker, and Melvyn Tan. (Alice Tully Hall. April 5 at 2:30 and 7.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—Members of the orchestra perform chamber music by Beethoven, Weber, and the late English violinist-pianist-singer-actress-composer Madeleine Dring. (Merkin Concert Hall. April 5 at 3.)

Music Amici—The chamber ensemble dedicates its concert to Brahms: his Horn Trio, First Clarinet Sonata, and B-Major Piano Trio. (Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Madison Ave. at 73rd St. April 5 at 4. Admission by contribution.)

Carmina String Quartet—Performing quartets by Haydn (Op. 54, No. 1), Mendelssohn (in F Minor, Op. 80), and Brahms (in A Minor, Op. 51, No. 2). (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. April 5 at 5.)

Music Today Ensemble—Christopher Kendall conducts the group in music of our century, including Lukas Foss's "Time Cycle" and the première of Sebastian Currier's "Vocalissimus" (both of which will feature soprano Carmen Pelton). (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., Plaza Level. April 6 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Garrick Ohlsson—The pianist performs two Beethoven sonatas (Op. 57 and Op. 109), as well as Chopin's Twenty-four Preludes (Op. 28). (Carnegie Hall. April 7 at 8.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Performing a Michael Haydn Divertimento, a new work by Katia Tchemberdji, and (with pianist Lilian Kallir) Dvořák's Piano Quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall. April 7 at 8.)

John Corrigan—Pianist, performing music by Schumann, Liszt, and Alkan. (New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 122 E. 58th St. 752-1938. April 8 at 7.)

Shanghai String Quartet—The ensemble plays Beethoven's C-Minor Quartet (Op. 18, No. 4), Zhou Long's "Song of the Ch'in," and (with the assistance of pianist Tian Jiang) Dvořák's Piano Quintet. (Miller Theatre. April 8 at 8.)

Guarneri Quartet—The group's members perform Beethoven's D-Major String Trio (Op. 9, No. 2), Shostakovich's Piano Quintet (with the assistance of Yefim Bronfman), and Smetana's String Quartet No. 1 (subtitled "From My Life," a work of musical autobiography with details as precise as a high-pitched squeal to portray the onset of the composer's deafness). (Alice Tully Hall. April 8 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Marky Mark & the Funky Bunch—Jeez, what can be said? Everyone wants his body. And he seems to genuinely stand behind his raps, even if his sampling ideas are less than inspired. More credible, in a bizarre, in-your-face way, than brother Donny's band (New Kids on the Block), this trouser-dropping and ultimately pretty damned sweet young man is a welcome addition to the world of teen-age hype. Who knows—if he begins to work as hard on his musical chops as he does on his muscles, this photogenic Priapus could be around for a long time. (Academy Theatre, 234 W. 43rd St. 307-7171. April 2 at 10.)

Sarah McLachlan—A relative newcomer to the alternative-music scene, McLachlan possesses such a pure, expressionistic voice that she never needs to showboat. On her newly released album, "Solace," her strong, easy-paced melodies and compassionate lyrics combine to make some sweetly seductive music. While she acknowledges influences ranging from Joni Mitchell to Kate Bush, McLachlan manages to stand on her own—a terrific new singer and songwriter. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. April 7 at 8.) For tickets call 307-7171.

Fugazi—This post-punk band from Washington, D.C., runs its own independent label, Dischord, refuses to sell concert tickets for more than five dollars, and has managed to sell half a million records since 1988 while declining many offers to sign with a major record company. Shrugging off all forms of pop-culture coronation is a strategy that neatly dovetails with the controlled chaos and hooklessness of their sound and that adds authority to lyrics about aggressive dissent and personal iconoclasm. A lot of people feel that this is a great band. At the very least, Fugazi broadcasts the big punk "No!" in an unusually affirmative manner. (Palladium, 126 E. 14th St. 473-7171. April 8 at 8.)

Harry Connick, Jr., and His Orchestra—Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. March 30-31, April 2-4, and April 6-7, all at 8.

Dick Hyman—With Kenny Davern. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. March 31 at 8.)

Adam Makowicz—Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. April 2 at 8.

"Highlights in Jazz"—The Al Grey quintet, Clark Terry, Red Rodney, Junior Mance, and others. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St., between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. April 2 at 8.)

The Cowboy Junkies and John Prine—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. April 2 at 8.

Irish Music—James Keane, Jerry O'Sullivan, Eileen Ivers, Joanie Madden, Mary Coogan, and Cathy Ryan. (Ethnic Folk Arts Center, 179 Varick St. April 3 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the performance.)

Gary Lucas—Roulette, 228 West Broadway. 219-8242. April 5 at 9.

Fourplay—With Jon Lucien. (Beacon Theatre. April 3 at 8.)

Take 6—With Tuck & Patti. (Beacon Theatre. April 4 at 8.)

"Music from Appalachia"—Etta Baker, Melvin Wine, Hazel Dickens, Gerry Milnes, and Mike Seeger. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. 873-3400. April 4 at 7:30.)

Metallica—Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. April 4 at 7:30 and April 8 at 8.

"Masters of Indian Music"—Ustad Alla Rakha, Sultan Khan, Zakir Hussain, and Ken Zuckerman. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. April 4 at 7.)

Inti-Illimani—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. April 4 at 8.

Donald Byrd—With Randy Weston, Barry Harris, Ahnee Sharon Freeman, and others, in a tribute to Thelonious Monk. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. April 4 at 8.)

Saffire—The Uppity Blues Women—With Amiri Baraka, Archie Shepp, and Get Set (V.O.P.). (Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. April 5 at 3.)

New York Theatre Organ Society—Presenting Stan Kann. (Schwartz Athletic Center, L.I.U. Brooklyn Campus, Flatbush and DeKalb Aves. April 5 at 3. For information about tickets, call 1-718 225-1643.)

L.A. Guns—Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. 307-7171. April 5 at 10.

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—In an exhibition game vs. the Mets, April 4 at 1:30.... ¶ Opening day is April 7, vs. the Boston Red Sox, at 1.

Mets—In an exhibition game vs. the Yankees, April 5 at 1:40.

Rangers—Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, April 2 at 7:30.

Islanders—Vs. the Devils, April 4 at 2:05.

Devils—Vs. the Washington Capitals, April 1 at 7:35.... ¶ Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, April 5 at 5:05.

Knicks—Vs. the Chicago Bulls, March 31.... ¶ Vs. the Atlanta Hawks, April 3.... ¶ Vs. the Detroit Pistons, April 7. (Game time, 7:30.)

Nets—Vs. the San Antonio Spurs, March 30.... ¶ Vs. the Milwaukee Bucks, April 3.... ¶ Vs. the Atlanta Hawks, April 7. (Game time, 7:30.)

(The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000; the Mets at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; the Rangers and the Knicks at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Devils and the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1.... **Trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1.... At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Garden Club Week"—As if the spring flower show weren't enough, the people at the New York Botanical Garden have arranged for local garden clubs to display flower arrangements of their own design, in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, and have invited gardening notables—Nancy Novogrod (April 3), Renny Reynolds (April 7), and Martha Stewart (April 9)—to come for lunch and talk. The Conservatory is open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 4, and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6. For more information about the lecture/luncheons, call 220-8724.

Readings—April 1 at 7: Michael Cunningham reads from his novel "A Home at the End of the World." (Brentano's, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.)... ¶ April 1 at 7: Denis Johnson, David Mura, and Susan Prospere read from their own poetry. (Poetry Society of America, National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)... ¶ April 1 at 9: Jim Carroll and Eileen Myles read from their own works. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)... ¶ April 2 at 8: Russell Baker reads from his own work. (Universalist Church, 160 Central Park W., at 76th St. For information about tickets, call 875-4128.)... ¶ April 5 at 4: April Bernard, Susanne Ehrhardt, and Vijay Seshadri read from their own poetry. (Educational Alliance, 197 East Broadway. No tickets necessary.)... ¶ April 6 at 7:30: Ursula Le Guin, Paule Marshall, and Grace Paley read from their own works. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. For information about tickets, call 570-5001.)... ¶ April 6 at 8: W. S. Merwin reads from his own poetry. (St. Jean Baptiste Performance Space, 184 E. 76th St. For information about tickets, call 727-6200.)... ¶ April 6 at 8: Alice Adams and Francine Prose read from their own fiction. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.)

Walks, April 4—At 10:30 A.M.: Christopher Gray leads a tour of row houses on the Upper West Side. For reservations, call 799-0520.... ¶ At noon: Adventure on a Shoestring sponsors a walk of Sunnyside Gardens, Queens, the first planned community in the country. For reservations, call 265-2663.... ¶ At 1: Citywalks sponsors a tour of Greenwich Village. For reservations, call 989-2456.... ¶ At 1: The Radical Walking Tour people take on the Chelsea Hotel. For more information, call 1-718 492-0069.

Memoranda—Daylight Saving Time begins April 5. Turn your clocks ahead an hour.... Sanford Smith's annual "Works on Paper" show will be held April 3-4, from 11 to 8, and April 5, from 11 to 7, at the 7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St.

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THE MOVIE HOUSES

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5	6	7	8			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 18.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Edward II" (directed by Derek Jarman).
Theatre 2: "American Dream" (†).
Theatre 3: "Mississippi Masala" (Mira Nair), with Denzel Washington, Sarita Choudhury, Charles Dutton, Roshan Seth, Joe Seneca, Tico Wells, Sharmila Tagore, and Ranjit Chowdhry.
Theatre 4: "Where Angels Fear to Tread" (Charles Sturridge), with Helena Bonham Carter, Judy Davis, Rupert Graves, Giovanni Guidelli, Barbara Jefford, and Helen Mirren.
Theatre 5: "Roadside Prophets" (Abbe Wool), with John Doe and Adam Horovitz.
Theatre 6: "Proof" (Jocelyn Moorhouse)), with Hugo Weaving, Genevieve Picot, and Russell Crowe.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
March 30: Theatre closed.
March 31-April 2: (Separate admissions) "The Puerto Rican Mambo (Not a Musical)" (Ben Model), with Luis Caballero; "Finzan" (1990, Cheik Oumar Sissoko; in Bambara); and "The Five Last Days" (1982, Adlon; in German), with Irm Hermann and Lena Stolze.
April 3-5: "The Last of England" (1987, Derek Jarman); and "The Garden" (1990, Jarman).
April 6: Theatre closed.
From April 7: 'The Last of England"; and "Caravaggio" (1986, Jarman).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 3: "My Cousin Vinny."

Loews Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: Through April 2: "Shadows and Fog" (†). From April 3: French Film Festival.
Theatre 2: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 3: "Shadows and Fog" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Mambo Kings" (†).
Theatre 5: Through April 2: "Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield, Jackée, Jonathan Brandis, Ilene Graff, and Vinessa Shaw. From April 3: "Thunderheart" (Michael Apted), with Val Kilmer, Sam Shepard, Graham Greene, and Fred Ward.
Theatre 6: "Ruby" (John Mackenzie), with Danny Aiello, Sherilyn Fenn, and Arliss Howard.
Theatre 7: "The Power of One" (John G. Avildsen), with Stephen Dorff, Armin Mueller-Stahl, John Gielgud, Morgan Freeman, and Fay Masterson.

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Kafka" (Steven Soderbergh), with Jeremy Irons, Theresa Russell, Joel Grey, Alec Guinness, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Ian Holm, and Jeroen Krabbé.
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "The Adventures of the Great Mouse Detective," a Disney animated film; and (evenings only) "Shakes the Clown" (Bobcat Goldthwait), with Goldthwait.
Theatre 3: "Daughters of the Dust" (1991, Julie Dash).
Theatre 4: "Noises Off" (†).
Theatre 5: "Hear My Song" (†).
Theatre 6: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).
Theatre 7: Through April 2: "Voices from the Front." From April 3: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton, James Woods, Griffin Dunne, Philip Bosco, Jerry Orbach, and Michael Madsen.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.
Theatre 3: "The Prince of Tides" (†).
Theatre 4: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 5: "JFK" (†).
Theatre 6: "Bugsy" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through April 2: "Grand Canyon" (†).
From April 3: "Rock-A-Doodle" (Don Bluth), an animated film.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"White Men Can't Jump" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "The Prince of Tides" (†).
Theatre 2: Through April 2: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly. From April 3: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton, James Woods, Griffin Dunne, Philip Bosco, Jerry Orbach, and Michael Madsen.
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "Beauty and the Beast" (†); and (evenings only) "Noises Off" (†).
Theatre 4: "Bugsy" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 3: "Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield, Jackée, Jonathan Brandis, Ilene Graff, and Vinessa Shaw.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Bugsy" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: Through April 2: "Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield, Jackée, Jonathan Brandis, Ilene Graff, and Vinessa Shaw. From April 3: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton, James Woods, Griffin Dunne, Philip Bosco, Jerry Orbach, and Michael Madsen.
Theatre 2: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Crown Gotham, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Where Angels Fear to Tread" (Charles Sturridge), with Helena Bonham Carter, Judy Davis, and Rupert Graves.

At the Walter Reade, Preben Lerdorff-Rye in "Ordet"

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 2: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"American Me" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Power of One" (John G. Avildsen), with Stephen Dorff, Armin Mueller-Stahl, John Gielgud, and Morgan Freeman.

Art East Cinema, 1st Ave. at 60th. (644-1111)
"Europa Europa" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Noises Off" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lovers" (Vicente Aranda, in Spanish), with Victoria Abril, Jorge Sanz, and Maribel Verdu.
Theatre 3: "Hear My Song" (†).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "This Is My Life" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.
Theatre 3: Through April 2: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly. From April 3: "Thunderheart" (Michael Apted), with Val Kilmer, Sam Shepard, Graham Greene, and Fred Ward.
Theatre 4: Through April 2: "Memoirs of an Invisible Man" (John Carpenter), with Chevy Chase, Daryl Hannah, and Sam Neill. From April 3: "Rock-A-Doodle" (Don Bluth), an animated film.
Theatre 5: "Article 99" (Howard Deutch), with Ray Liotta and Kiefer Sutherland.
Theatre 6: "Ruby" (John Mackenzie), with Danny Aiello, Sherilyn Fenn, and Arliss Howard.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "JFK" (†).
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Under Suspicion" (Simon Moore), with Liam Neeson and Laura San Giacomo.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Mambo Kings" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Shadows and Fog" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield, Jackée, Jonathan Brandis, Ilene Graff, and Vinessa Shaw.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 2: "American Me" (†).

Loews Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: Through April 2: "The Mambo Kings" (†). From April 3: "Rock-A-Doodle" (Don Bluth), an animated film.
Theatre 2: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 3: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 4: "Mississippi Masala" (Mira Nair), with Denzel Washington, Sarita Choudhury, Charles Dutton, Roshan Seth, Joe Seneca, Tico Wells, Sharmila Tagore, and Ranjit Chowdhry.
Theatre 5: "Ruby" (John Mackenzie), with Danny Aiello, Sherilyn Fenn, and Arliss Howard.
Theatre 6: Through April 2: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly. From April 3: "Thunderheart" (Michael Apted), with Val Kilmer, Sam Shepard, Graham Greene, and Fred Ward.
Theatre 7: "The Power of One" (John G. Avildsen), with Stephen Dorff, Armin Mueller-Stahl, John Gielgud, and Morgan Freeman.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 2: Through April 2: (Matinées only) "Beauty and the Beast" (†); and (evenings only) "Noises Off" (†). From April 3: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton, James Woods, Griffin Dunne, Philip Bosco, Jerry Orbach, and Michael Madsen.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through April 7: "The Ear" (1969, Karel Kachyna; in Czech). From April 8: "Rock Soup" (1991, Lech Kowalski).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: Through March 31: "35 Up"

(Michael Apted), a documentary. April 1-7: "The Cameraman" (1928, Edward Sedgwick; silent), with Buster Keaton. From April 8: "Mindwalk" (Bernt Capra), with Liv Ullmann, Sam Waterston, and John Heart.

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly.

Theatre 2: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: "The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.

Theatre 2: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: "The Puerto Rican Mambo (Not a Musical)" (Ben Model), with Luis Caballero.

Theatre 2: "Europa Europa" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Double Life of Véronique" (Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French and Polish), with Irène Jacob and Philippe Volter.

Theatre 4: "Memoirs of a River" (Judit Elek, in Hungarian).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: "This Is My Life" (†).

Theatre 2: "My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.

Theatre 3: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (†).

Theatre 4: "My Cousin Vinny."

Theatre 5: "Wayne's World" (†).

Theatre 6: "Ruby" (John Mackenzie), with Danny Aiello, Sherilyn Fenn, and Arliss Howard.

Theatre 7: Through April 2: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly. From April 3: "Thunderheart" (Michael Apted), with Val Kilmer, Sam Shepard, Graham Greene, and Fred Ward.

Theatre 8: "Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield, Jackée, Jonathan Brandis, Ilene Graff, and Vinessa Shaw.

Theatre 9: "American Me" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Noises Off" (†); and (evenings only) "White Men Can't Jump" (†).

Theatre 2: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).

Theatre 3: Through April 2: "White Men Can't Jump" (†). From April 3: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton, James Woods, Griffin Dunne, Philip Bosco, Jerry Orbach, and Michael Madsen.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

"Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "JFK" (†).

Theatre 2: Through April 2: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly. From April 3: "Rock-A-Doodle" (Don Bluth), an animated film.

Theatre 3: "Edward II" (Derek Jarman).

Theatre 4: "The Prince of Tides" (†).

Theatre 5: "Grand Canyon" (†).

Theatre 6: "Black Robe" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

March 30: "The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.

March 31 at 6:30 and 9: Benefit showings of "The Cameraman" (1928, Edward Sedgwick; silent), with Buster Keaton. Live musical accompaniment by Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks.

From April 1: "The Lawnmower Man."

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"JFK" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"Othello" (1952, Orson Welles), with Welles.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

Theatre 1: "Mississippi Masala" (Mira Nair), with Denzel Washington, Sarita Choudhury, Charles Dutton, Roshan Seth, Joe Seneca, Tico Wells, Sharmila Tagore, and Ranjit Chowdhry.

Theatre 2: "Madame Bovary" (†).

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)

"Howards End" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins, Vanessa Redgrave, Helena Bonham Carter, Emma Thompson, and James Wilby

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"Meeting Venus" (István Szabó), with Glenn Close and Niels Arestrup.

Loews Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Shadows and Fog" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

"This Is My Life" (†).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "Raise the Red Lantern" (Zhang Yimou; in Chinese).

Theatre 2: "Toto le Heros" (Jaco Van Dormael; in French), with Michel Bouquet and Mireille Perrier.

Theatre 3: Through April 4: "The Double Life of Véronique" (Krzysztof Kieslowski, in French and Polish), with Irène Jacob and Philippe Volter. From April 5: "Delicatessen" (Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, in French), with Dominique Pinon and Marie-Laure Dougnac.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"Fried Green Tomatoes" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).

Theatre 2: Through April 2: "The Mambo Kings" (†). From April 3: "Thunderheart" (Michael Apted), with Val Kilmer, Sam Shepard, Graham Greene, and Fred Ward.

Theatre 3: "Basic Instinct" (†).

Theatre 4: Through April 2: "Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield, Jackée, Jonathan Brandis, Ilene Graff, and Vinessa Shaw. From April 3: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton, James Woods, Griffin Dunne, Philip Bosco, Jerry Orbach, and Michael Madsen.

Theatre 5: "Noises Off" (†).

Theatre 6: "The Power of One" (John G. Avildsen), with Stephen Dorff, Armin Mueller-Stahl, John Gielgud, and Morgan Freeman.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.

Theatre 2: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "The Mambo Kings" (†).

Theatre 2: "My Cousin Vinny" (directed by Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.

Theatre 3: "Bugsy" (†).

Theatre 4: "Basic Instinct" (†).

Theatre 5: Through April 2: "My Cousin Vinny." From April 3: "Thunderheart" (Michael Apted), with Val Kilmer, Sam Shepard, Graham Greene, and Fred Ward.

Theatre 6: "Basic Instinct" (†).

Theatre 7: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

Through April 2: "Noises Off" (†).

From April 3: "Straight Talk" (Barnet Kellman), with Dolly Parton, James Woods, Griffin Dunne, Philip Bosco, Jerry Orbach, and Michael Madsen.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).

Theatre 3: "Gladiator" (Rowdy Herrington), with James Marshall, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Brian Dennehy, Robert Loggia, and Ossie Davis.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"Ladybugs" (Sidney J. Furie), with Rodney Dangerfield, Jackée, Jonathan Brandis, Ilene Graff, and Vinessa Shaw.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Ruby" (John Mackenzie), with Danny Aiello, Sherilyn Fenn, and Arliss Howard.

Theatre 2: "American Me" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Le Cinematographe, 15 Vandam St. (675-4680)

"Alex" (directed by Teresa Villaverde Cabral, in Portuguese).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)

March 30: "My New Partner" (1985, Claude Zidi; in French), with Philippe Noiret; and "One Woman or Two" (1987, Daniel Vigne; in English and French), with Gérard Depardieu, Sigourney Weaver, and Ruth Westheimer.

March 31: "Old Enough" (1984, Marisa Silver), with Sarah Boyd; and "MacArthur's Children" (1985, Masahiro Shinoda; in Japanese), with Masako Natsume.

April 1-2: "Too Beautiful for You" (1989, Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Carole Bouquet, and Josiane Balasko; and "May Fools" (1990, Louis Malle; in French), with Michel Piccoli and Miou-Miou.

April 3-4: "Chocolat" (†); and "Sugar Cane Alley" (1983, Euzhan Paley; in French).

April 5: "Rhapsody in August" (Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Richard Gere; and "Ran" (1985, Kurosawa; in Japanese).

April 6: "Colonel Redl" (1985, István Szabó; in German), with Klaus Maria Brandauer; and "Hay Babu Riba" (1987, Jovan Acin; in Serbo-Croatian).

April 7: "Leningrad Cowboys Go America" (1990, Aki Kaurismaki); and "Love Without Pity" (Eric Rochant; in French).

From April 8: "My Father's Glory" (1991, Yves Robert; in French), with Julien Ciamaca; and "My Mother's Castle" (1991, Robert; in French), with Ciamaca.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

March 30: "Surrender" (1927, Edward Sloman; silent), with Mary Philbin; and "The Bells" (1926, James Young; silent), with Lionel Barrymore.

March 31: "Hester Street" (1975, Joan Micklin Silver), with Steven Keats, Carol Kane, Mel Howard, and Dorrie Kavanaugh; and "The Angel Levine" (1970, Jan Kadar), with Zero Mostel, Harry Belafonte, and Ida Kaminska.

April 1: "The Goldbergs" (1950, Walter Hart), with Gertrude Berg, Philipe Loeb, and David Opatoshu; and "Mr. Cohen Takes a Walk" (1935, William Beaudine), with Paul Graetz.

April 2: "The Sunshine Boys" (†); and "The Heart of New York" (1932, Mervyn LeRoy), with Smith and Dale.

From April 3: "The Wages of Fear" (1953, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Yves Montand, Charles Vanel, Folco Lulli, and Peter Van Eyck.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

March 30: "Devil in the Flesh" (1987, Marco Bellocchio; in Italian), with Maruschka Detmers and Federico Pitzalis; and "China Is Near" (1968, Bellocchio; in Italian).

March 31: "The Trouble with Harry" (1955, Alfred Hitchcock), with Edmund Gwenn, John Forsythe, and Shirley MacLaine; and "Lifeboat" (1944, Alfred Hitchcock), with Tallulah Bankhead, William Bendix, Henry Hull, and Walter Slezak.

April 1: "Chinatown" (1974, Roman Polanski), with Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway, and John Huston; and "Cul-de-Sac" (1966, Roman Polanski), with Donald Pleasence and Françoise Dorléac.

April 2: "From the Life of the Marionettes" (1980, Ingmar Bergman; in German), with Robert Atzorn, Christine Buchegger, and Martin Benrath; and "Port of Call" (1948, Bergman; in Swedish), with Bengt Eklund.

April 3-4: "Annie Hall" (1977, Woody Allen), with Allen and Diane Keaton; and "Manhattan" (1979, Allen), with Allen, Keaton, Michael Murphy, and Meryl Streep.

April 5: "The Lady from Shanghai" (1948, Orson Welles), with Rita Hayworth, Welles, and Everett Sloane; and "Gilda" (1946, Charles Vidor), with Hayworth, Glenn Ford, and George Macready.

April 6: "Woman in the Dunes" (1964, Hiroshi Teshigahara; in Japanese), with Eiji Okada; and "Face of Another" (1966, Teshigahara; in Japanese), with Tatsuya Nakadai and Okada.

April 7: "Slaughterhouse-Five" (1972, George Roy Hill), with Michael Sacks; and "Catch-22" (1970, Mike Nichols), with Alan Arkin, Jon Voight, Richard Benjamin, Art Garfunkel, Buck Henry, Martin Balsam, Orson Welles, Bob Balaban, Paula Prentiss, Martin Sheen, Jack Gilford, Peter Bonerz, Charles Grodin, Tony Perkins, Bob Newhart, and Marcel Dalio.

April 8: "Morning Glory" (†) and "Sylvia Scarlet" (see page 20).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

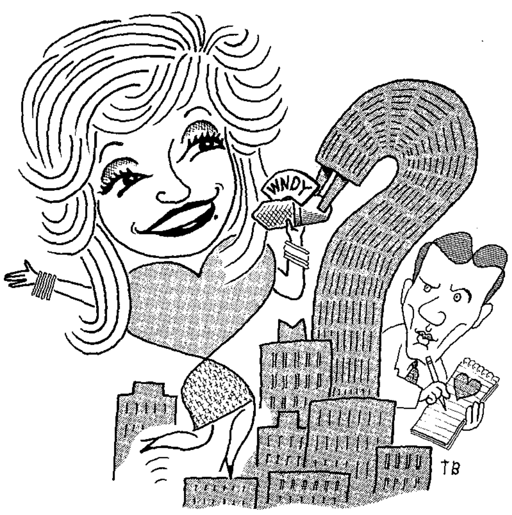
Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—April 6 at 2:30: "Moulin Rouge" (†). . . . ¶ April 6 at 6: "Limite" (1929, directed by Mario Peixoto; a Brazilian silent film). . . . ¶ April 7 at 3 and 6: "La Demoiselle Sauvage" (1991, Léa Pool; a Canadian film, in French), with Patricia Tulasne, Matthias Habich, and Michel Voita.

MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

Film Society of Lincoln Center (at MOMA)—An international festival of new films by new directors. March 30 at 6: "Le Ciel de Paris" (Michel Bena, France). . . . ¶ March 31 at 6 and April 1 at 9: "Shadow on the Snow" (Attilla Janisch, Hungary). . . . ¶ March 31 at 9: "Quiet Days in August" (Pantelis Voulgaris, Greece). . . . ¶ April 1 at 6 and April 2 at 9: "Hey, You Wild Geese" (Lidia Bobrova, Russia). . . . ¶ April 2 at 6 and April 4 at 12:15: "Children of Nature" (Fridrik Thor Fridriksson, Iceland). . . . ¶ April 3 at 6 and April 5 at 9: "The Living End" (Gregg Araki, United States). . . . ¶ April 3 at 9 and April 4 at 6: "The Hours and Times" (Christopher Munch, United States). . . . ¶ April 4 at 3 and April 5 at 6: "Black Harvest" (Bob Connelly and Robin Anderson, Australia). . . . ¶ April 4 at 9 and April 5 at 3: "City of the Blind" (Alberto Cortes, Mexico). (Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. For information, call 875-5610.)

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—March 30 at 2: "Journey of Hope" (1990, Xavier Koller). . . . ¶ March 30 at 4:15 and 6: "Happy End" (1987, Marcel Schüpbach). . . . ¶ March 31 at 2: "Same to You" (1987, Anja Franke, Dani Levy, and Helmut Berger). . . . ¶ March 31 at 3:45 and April 1 at 7:30: "Journey Into the Interior" (1988, Matthias von Gunten). . . . ¶ March 31 at 5:45 and April 1 at 2: "Arthur Rimbaud, a Biography" (1991, Richard Dindo). . . . ¶ March 31 at 8:30: "The Magic Flute" (1975, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish). . . . ¶ April 1 at 5:45 and 9:15: "Peasant Chronicle" (1990, Jacqueline Veuve). . . . ¶ April 2 at 2 and 7 and April 5 at 2: "Stalker" (1979, Andrei Tarkovsky; in Russian). . . . ¶ April 2 at 5 and 10 and April 4 at 4:15: "Day of Wrath" (1943, Carl Dreyer; in Danish), with Lisbeth Movin and Anna Svierkier. . . . ¶ April 3 at 2 and 6:15 and April 5 at 7:30: "The Sacrifice" (1986, Andrei Tarkovsky; in Swedish), with Erland Josephson. . . . ¶ April 3 at 4:45, 9, and 10 and April 4 at 6:15: "Pickpocket" (1959, Robert Bresson; in French). . . . ¶ April 4 at 2 and 8 and April 5 at 5: "Nostalghia" (1984, Tarkovsky; in Italian), with Erland Josephson. . . . ¶ April 7 at 2 and April 8 at 6:30: "Ordet" (†). . . . ¶ April 7 at 4:30 and April 8 at 2 and 9: "A Man Escaped" (†). . . . ¶ April 8 at 4:15: "Demon!" (1977, Larry Cohen), wtih Tony Lo Bianco, Sandy Dennis, Sylvia Sidney, and Sam Levene.

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—A Dennis Potter retrospective. April 2 at 5:15: "The Singing Detective, Parts 1-3" (1986, BBC), with Michael Gambon. . . . ¶ April 3 at 5:30: "The Singing Detective, Parts 4-6.". . . ¶ April 4 at noon: "The Singing Detective, Parts 1-6.". . . ¶ April 5 at 2:30: "Blue Remembered Hills" (1979, BBC), with Helen Mirren, Colin Welland, Robin Ellis, and Michael Elphick; and "Cream in My Coffee" (1980, London Weekend Television), with Lionel Jeffries and Peggy Ashcroft.



Dolly Parton and James Woods in "Straight Talk"

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"Borders and Barrios: The Chicano in Hollywood Film, 1908-87" April 4 at 2: Six silent films. . . . ¶ April 4 at 4: "Bordertown" (1935, Archie Mayo), with Paul Muni, Bette Davis, and Margaret Lindsay. . . . ¶ April 5 at 2: "Zoot Suit" (1982, Luis Valdes), with Edward James Olmos and Charles Aidman. Mr. Olmos will be present. . . . ¶ April 5 at 5: "The Lawless" (1950, Joseph Losey), with Macdonald Carey and Gail Russell.

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—Films by Zhang Yimou, actor. April 3 at 6: "Old Well" (1987, Wu Tianming; in Mandarin). . . . ¶ April 3 at 8:30: "A Terra-Cotta Warrior" (1990, Ching Siu Tung; in Mandarin).

Goethe House, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (439-8700)—April 4 at 1: "Rosalie Goes Shopping" (1989, Percy Adlon), with Marianne Sägebracht and Brad Davis.

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—A program of films by Paul Strand. Showings Wednesdays and Fridays through Sundays at 2 and 4 and Thursays at 2, 4, and 6:15.

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—April 3 at 6: "Zorns Lemma" (1970, Hollis Frampton). . . . ¶ April 3 at 7:30: "I Want to Be Unfaithful to My Husband" (1925, Mario Camerini; an Italian silent film). . . . ¶ April 3 at 9, April 4 at 5, and April 5 at 3 and 9: "Cage/Cunningham" (1991, Elliot Caplan). . . . ¶ April 4 at 3: "War and the Dream of Momi" (1917, Giovanni Pastrone and Segundo de Chomon; an Italian silent film). . . . ¶ April 4-5 at 7: Two programs of Swedish avant-garde films, 1924-90. . . . ¶ April 4 at 9 and April 5 at 5: Two different programs of film by Harry Smith.

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—April 7 at noon: "The Lodger" (1929, Alfred Hitchcock; silent), with Ivor Novello.

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. (1-718 783-6501)—A program of films directed by Israeli women. April 5 at 2: "Anou Banou: The Daughters of Utopia" (1982, Edna Politi; in Hebrew).

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—April 5 at noon, 3:05, and 7:10: "Chameleon Street" (1990, Wendell B. Harris, Jr.); "Putney Swope" (1969, Robert Downey), with Arnold Johnson and Antonio Fargas; and "Changing Times" (1990, Tony Carpenter). . . . ¶ April 6 at 1, 4:20, and 7: "Chameleon Street"; "Watermelon Man" (1970, Melvin Van Peebles), with Godfrey Cambridge, Estelle Parsons, and D'Urville Martin; and "Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads" (1983, Spike Lee). . . . ¶ April 7 at 1 and 3:45: "To Sleep with Anger" (1990, Charles Burnett), with Danny Glover; and "Making 'Do the Right Thing' " (1989, St. Clair Bourne), a documentary. . . . ¶ April 7 at 6: "They Came Before Columbus" (1989, Clemson Brown), "Black History: Lost, Stolen or Strayed" (1969, George Foster), and "Dr. Jeffries' Albany Lecture" (1991).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—April 1 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "The Cry of the Owl" (1987, Claude Chabrol; in French), with Christophe Malavoy, Mathilda May, Jacques Penot, and Virginie Thévenet. . . . ¶ April 8 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "The Double Life of Véronique" (1991, Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French and Polish), with Irène Jacob and Philippe Volter.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

American Dream—Barbara Kopple's documentary, about a strike in a Minnesota meatpacking plant, is a lucid and unfussy piece of movie journalism which manages to be as complexly affecting as a great novel. The story that she tells here is a terrifying one. The workers at the Austin, Minnesota, plant of Geo. A. Hormel & Company decide to go on strike on August 17, 1985, rather than accept a rollback of their wages and benefits. The union, Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, is led by a militant president, Jim Guyette, and a fiery free-lance consultant, Ray Rogers. Together, Guyette and Rogers create a terrific spirit of energy and resolve in the rank and file. But Lewie Anderson, a veteran negotiator for the international union, thinks that their strategy is "doomed." As the strike wears on, our reactions to what we're seeing become more volatile. Our hearts are with the pumped-up rank and file of P-9, but our heads, increasingly (and surprisingly), are with the pragmatic Anderson: his anaylsis of the local's chances against the company proves accurate in virtually every particular. The defeat of the stubborn P-9ers is agonizing to watch, and we begin to realize that Kopple's apparently even tone has nothing to do with objectivity or resignation—that it is, rather, the exaggerated calm of deep shock, the voice of an eyewitness to a smashup on the highway. The movie embodies a kind of tragic understanding of American life—tragic in the original and the fullest sense, in which the spectacle of unspeakable calamity produces pity and terror and then an unforeseeable and penetrating clarity. This is a masterpiece of social art. Academy Award for best documentary in 1991.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/23/92.) (Angelika Film Center.)

American Me—A "Boyz N the Barrio" without John Singleton's warm curbside manner, this movie drives full throttle into the brick wall of reductive naturalism. The story sets out to show how capitalist, racist America pits underclass minorities against each other and corrupts them from within. The film itself is a machine that shreds its characters. Aiming for an ultra-realistic presentation of the formation of the Mexican-American mob, Edward James Olmos, in his big-screen directorial début, arrives at an agonizingly portentous style that's about as "real" as a frozen stare held for two hours and five minutes. The cast includes William Forsythe and Pepe Serna, as the childhood buddies who help Olmos's character found a convict gang whose drug business extends beyond prison, to the L.A. streets. Olmos and the screenwriters (Floyd Mutrux and Desmond Nakano) don't allow anyone a hint of spontaneity or suggest the merest possibility of transcendence. They're too busy over-proving that society's neglected children grow into twisted, brutal adults.—M.S. (59th Street East Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and National Twin.)

Basic Instinct—With Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone, directed by Paul Verhoeven. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Loews Orpheum VII, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Beauty and the Beast—It's got storytelling vigor and clarity, bright, eclectic animation, and a frisky musical wit. In this Disney version of the fairy tale, Belle (the voice of Paige O'Hara) is a book-reading French provincial girl—a virtuous sort of Mademoiselle Bovary. She dreams of a Prince Charming but gets more than she bargains for when she becomes hostage to the buffalolike Beast (the surprisingly orotund Robby Benson). Underneath his fang-gnashing glower, he's a prisoner of adolescence—unlike Peter Pan, he wants to grow up. He's the opposite of Belle's lunkheaded village suitor, Gaston (Richard White), a narcissistic macho man. Throughout, the Howard Ashman–Alan Menken score is clever and fluid in the best Lerner and Loewe manner, with flashes of oddball humor that keep everything light and bouncy. (Gaston's theme song trumps "C'est Moi," from "Camelot.") There's a great cast of supporting utensils at the Beast's enchanted castle, led by Jerry Orbach in an ebullient vocal turn as the Chevalier-like candleholder, Lumiere. David Ogden Stiers is Cogsworth, the mantel clock; Angela Lansbury is Mrs. Potts, the teapot; and Jo Anne Worley is the Wardrobe. There isn't anything particularly haunting, and not all the script's variations are fresh. But this is easily the zippiest Disney cartoon feature in the thirty years since "101 Dalmatians." Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise directed the screenplay by Linda Woolverton.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, and Guild. . . . ¶ Murray Hill Cinemas. Matinées only. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin; through April 2, matinées only.)

Black Robe—An unusual and absorbing new film about North American Indians and a French Jesuit missionary in the early seventeenth century. It's a culture-clash drama in which the most important conflicts take place in the realm of the spirit. The main characters are an excruciatingly pious young priest called Father Laforgue (Lothaire Bluteau) and an Algonquian chief named Chomina (August Schellenberg). Their world views are so radically opposed that at times the two men seem unable to acknowledge each other as human. The screenwriter, Brian Moore, and the director, Bruce Beresford, show extraordinary respect for the stubborn, almost impenetrable otherness of their historical characters. The film is an adventure story in the truest sense: the filmmakers lead us into unknown territory, and keep pushing us farther and farther on, until, by the end, we find ourselves deep in the wilderness of the seventeenth-century consciousness. Bluteau's performance is enervated, but the script is superbly intelligent, the direction is confident, and Schellenberg's Chomina is magnificent. The picture moves on a steady, powerful flow of ideas and emotions, and it stirs in us a sense of discovery. Based on Moore's 1985 novel of the same name. Also with Aden Young, Sandrine Holt, and Tantoo Cardinal. Cinematography by Peter James.—T.R. (11/18/91) (Worldwide Cinemas.)

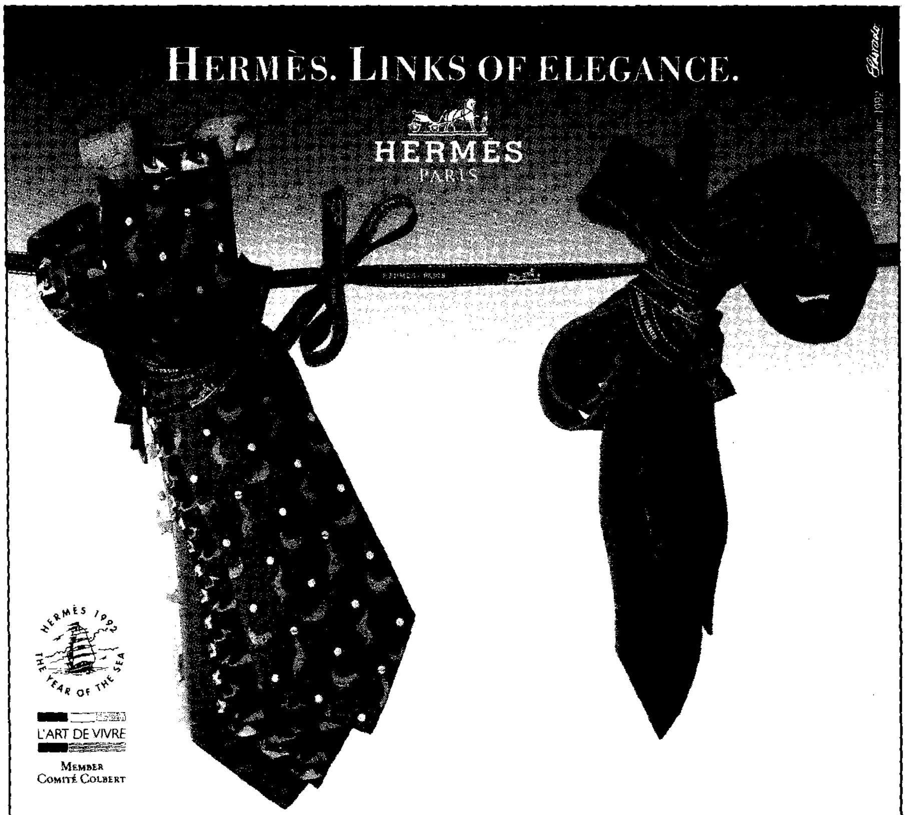
Bugsy—This opulent period gangster movie, written by James Toback and directed by Barry Levinson, is largely a showcase for the old-fashioned star magnetism of Warren Beatty, who plays the legendary Benjamin (Bugsy) Siegel. The screenplay portrays Bugsy as a charming, mercurial psychopath with a rather touching taste for glamour; it concentrates on the last few years of the hero's life, when he became a Hollywood celebrity and built the first hotel-casino in Las Vegas. He's a vivid, unpredictable, one-of-a-kind guy, and the filmmakers seem to realize that they can't take their eyes off him for a second. Siegel is a fascinating monster; we don't want to take our eyes off him, either. This is a rich role for Beatty, and he tears into it hungrily. It's the best kind of star performance: Beatty seems entirely himself, but in a new way. He's ferociously, mesmerizingly funny. Annette Bening plays Bugsy's lover, the tough, wily, independent-minded mob courtesan Virginia Hill, and she more than holds her own in her scenes with the star. And the movie is filled with pungent, memorable supporting performances. Ben Kingsley brings a surprisingly dry, elegant sense of comic timing to his portrait of sober Meyer Lansky (one of the hero's partners in the New York mob). Harvey Keitel, as Mickey Cohen, Bugsy's right-hand man in Los Angeles, spits out his profane lines as if they were live firecrackers. Elliott Gould plays the tiny role of Harry Greenberg, an aging, flabby mob schlemiel, and he's absolutely inspired; he plays this dazed character as a Willy Loman who has wandered too far from the old territory. Despite its lavish surface, this is essentially a movie of small, lovingly crafted pleasures. It's smart, swanky fun.—T.R. (12/30/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Eastside Cinema, 86th Street East Twin, and Criterion Center.)

Chocolat (1989)—Whatever Claire Denis's first feature is supposed to be about, it proves, at least, that the English don't have a monopoly on swanky colonial torpor. The movie is constructed as an extended flashback: a young Frenchwoman (named France) travelling in Africa remembers her fifties girlhood in a remote outpost of Cameroon, where her father was a district officer. Most of this story consists of smoldering looks exchanged by the girl's beautiful mother (Giulia Boschi) and the family's handsome African "boy," Protée (Isaach de Bankolé). When Maman feels herself becoming too hot and bothered at the sight of the noble black man, she brusquely orders him to fetch something; Protée deals with his frustration by taking a lot of showers. Nothing actually happens. The movie is all nuances—the pointed, unmistakable kind that allow audiences to congratulate themselves for having picked them up. Denis certainly knows how to attenuate erotic tension; then, with a sort of dry, academic sadism, she leaves it unresolved. Her picture is nothing but a long tease, high-toned but low-minded. In denying the dignified sufferer Protée any kind of release for his pent-up desire, Denis encourages us to think she's making a political point. What she's really doing is dehumanizing him—treating him as a gleaming hunk whose anger and wounded reserve just make him more exotically alluring. "Chocolat" looks pretty good, but it's merde in a fancy wrapper. Also with François Cluzet, Cécile Ducasse, Mireille Perrier, and Emmanuelle Chaulet. In French.—T.R. (8th St. Playhouse; April 3-4.)

Europa Europa—This superb film by the Polish director Agnieszka Holland is based on the memoirs of Salomon Perel, a German Jew who spent much of the Second World War passing for Aryan in an élite Hitler Youth academy. The movie dramatizes this almost inconceivable survival story with a surprisingly light touch. It bounds from one jaw-dropping episode to the next with the speed and the unnerving neutrality of a picaresque adventure, and never pauses to judge its ambiguous hero; it's content to let the ironies of his situation collect around him like reflections in dressing-room mirrors. His family's flight from the Nazis begins in 1938, on the eve of his bar mitzvah. Solly (played by a remarkable young actor, Marco Hofschneider) lands first in Lodz, Poland, and then in the Soviet Union, where he becomes a star pupil in a Communist school. After the Wehrmacht invades Russia and takes him prisoner, he reincarnates himself as an orphaned "pure" German, an Aryan child wandering in the barbaric eastern wilderness. We remain, however, constantly aware (as he is) of what his Nazi disguise conceals—his circumcised penis, the irreversible and unambiguous sign of his identity as a Jew. Holland uses this physical evidence of Solly's Jewishness as the fulcrum of the movie's delicately balanced narrative and moral tensions. Also with Julie Delpy, Andre Wilms, Halina Labonarska, and Rene Hofschneider. The real Salomon Perel appears, as himself, in the movie's final scene. In German and Russian.—T.R. (7/1/91) (Art East Cinema, and Quad Cinema.)

Fried Green Tomatoes—Cancer, wife-beating, burning crosses, barbecue, fat-lady jokes at the expense of Kathy Bates, wisdom dispensed by Jessica Tandy, and female bonding that stops just shy of lesbianism. That's the recipe for this clunky, fraudulent, yet apparently crowd-pleasing laugh- and tear-jerker. In the framing story, Tandy befriends Bates and inspires her with the Depression-era tale of tomboy Idgie (Mary Stuart Masterson) and pretty, demure Ruth (Mary-Louise Parker), who discover happiness when they found the Whistle Stop Café in Idgie's small Alabama home town. The director, Jon Avnet, drenches the palate with sweet sauce, then goes for the throat. The only good white males are run over by a train; in this feminist wish fulfillment, it isn't only tomatoes that get sliced. Written by Fannie Flagg (who has a bit role) and Carol Sobieski from Flagg's novel "Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café."—M.S. (Baronet, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

Grand Canyon—Or, the self-importance of being earnest. Kevin Kline plays an L.A. immigration lawyer who lives as comfortably as a hot entertainment lawyer; Danny Glover plays the tow-truck driver who rescues Kline when his car conks out in a rough black section of the city. Kline plots to repay his savior by moving Glover's sister to a better neighborhood and fixing Glover up with Alfre Woodard. Meanwhile, Kline's wife (Mary McDonnell) surges with maternal ardor when she finds a babe in the shrubbery. The director, Lawrence Kasdan, who co-wrote the script with his wife, Meg, pretends to confront the chaos of contemporary urban life: free-floating anger and violence, racial abra-



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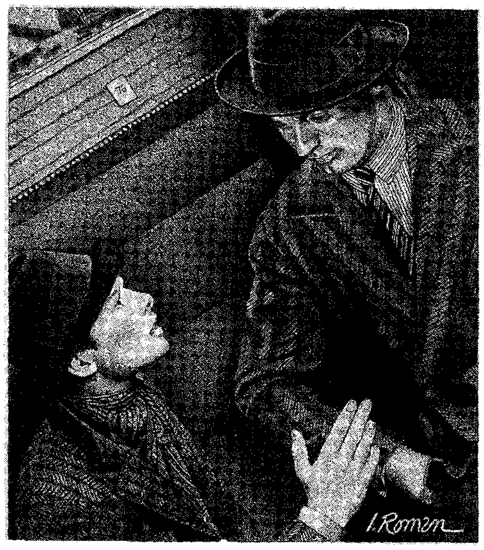

Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant in "Sylvia Scarlett"

George Cukor's 1936 drag picaresque, "Sylvia Scarlett" (playing April 8, at Theatre 80 St. Marks), is the prototypical cult movie. Cross-dressing has long been played for laughs and, more recently, for tears, but in this roisterous comedy-drama, based on a Compton Mackenzie novel, it's also the source of an odd, yearning lyricism. Katharine Hepburn used her clout to launch the production. She's the title character: a half-French girl who, shortly after her mother's death, crops her hair, dons men's clothes, and goes by the name Sylvester so she can escape with her crooked father (Edmund Gwenn) when he jumps from Marseilles to England. En route, they meet con man Cary Grant, and eventually the three team up, first as scam artists, then, improbably but wonderfully, as a travelling troupe known as the Pink Pierrots. There's more traction between Hepburn and Grant, even when he believes she's Gwenn's son, than between Hepburn and Brian Aherne, who plays the facetious painter with whom she falls in love.

The movie has a musical buzz and a crackpot poignancy. Cukor showcases bizarre, rambunctious characterizations, most notably Grant's lowdown, wised-up, tangentially generous grifter. If the director at times just coasts with the story's mood swings, the unpredictability is charming. (So is Joseph August's idyllic cinematography.) When Aherne says that Sylvester gives him a "queer feeling," the line gets a titter in revival houses. But there's nothing giggly about Hepburn's performance. She's neither a tomboy nor a larking ingénue: she defines the intersection of boyishness and girlishness. She's like an eroticized Peter Pan and Wendy combined. The movie is dedicated to "the adventurer," and Hepburn makes clear that, to Sylvia, burgeoning sexuality is the *great adventure.*

sions, the fragility of family bonds. But he keeps breaking the characters' falls with mystical whoopee cushions—a blend of enriched-white-bread comedy and New Age uplift. By the end of the movie, Kline can do no wrong; even the secretary he once slept with (Mary-Louise Parker) lands on her feet. "Grand Canyon" is a liberal soap opera: it manufactures biodegradable suds. Steve Martin provides a few tart moments as a producer of violent action films, but Kasdan punishes the character by shooting him in the thigh.—M.S. (Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Gramercy; through April 2.)

The Hand That Rocks the Cradle—This vengeful-nanny thriller has a catchy ad campaign: "Trust is her weapon. Innocence her opportunity. Revenge her only desire." The filmmakers, too, go after the trusting and innocent, but their desire is to make a killing at the box office. The twenty-eight-year-old screenwriter, Amanda Silver, spells out everything as if for the intelligence-impaired. Annabella Sciorra plays Claire, a devoted wife, mother, and, yes, botanist who blows the whistle on a lascivious gynecologist, catalyzing his suicide. Rebecca De Mornay is Peyton, the bad doctor's widow, who loses her own child and lies her way into Claire's nursery. And Ernie Hudson is the heroic, mentally challenged handyman who is wise with children: his name, of course, is Solomon. (Claire's husband, Michael, played by Matt McCoy, is a nonentity.) With its banal, docile household threatened by an enemy within, the film is like "The Stepfather" without wit or irony. De Mornay's Peyton gets off one campy verbal swipe at Solomon that's sure to be a favorite at high-school study halls, but Julianne Moore, as Michael's first love and Claire's friend, gives the performance of the movie. She's coiled and out there, like an exposed spring. She's also funny; she makes spikiness likable. Curtis Hanson directed, impersonally.—M.S. (Embassy.)

Hear My Song—In this small-scale comedy, Peter Chelsom, a first-time director, takes a whimsical conceit and sells it so hard that it loses most of its fragile charm. Micky O'Neill (played by Adrian Dunbar, who co-wrote the screenplay with Chelsom) manages a Liverpool music hall that caters to the local Irish community; the movie is about his attempt to find a legendary Irish tenor named Josef Locke, who hasn't been heard from in thirty years. Micky goes to Ireland to persuade Locke to return to England for a concert; on the home soil, the hero finds himself in a realm of ancient eccentricity and unearthly light, and the movie finds itself in Bill Forsyth territory. Chelsom tries, too strenuously, to evoke the enchanted comic tone of "Local Hero," and Dunbar seems to punctuate every gag with a roguish smile (often shooting one of these twinklers, unconscionably, over his shoulder). The relentless quirkiness is annoying, but the story is, on its own terms, well constructed, and the filmmakers take their fey, sentimental humor right to the limit: you can't say that they don't have the courage of their elfinness. And when Ned Beatty, who plays Locke, is on the screen the picture is nearly as transporting as it's intended to be. His performance is large-spirited comic acting: a pure specimen of Celtic soulfulness, the magical substance that everyone else in the movie has been trying to produce synthetically. Also with Shirley Anne Field.—T.R. (3/9/92) (Village East Cinemas, and Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

JFK—Oliver Stone's movie means to demonstrate that the assassination of John F. Kennedy was not the act of a disturbed Marxist loner named Lee Harvey Oswald but the result of a vast, complex right-wing conspiracy. The screenplay, by Stone and Zachary Sklar, packs an extraordinary amount of assassination lore into three hours and eight minutes; it also includes a ton of speculative material about governmental misconduct, and quite a few invented characters. The movie is a thick gumbo of truths, half-truths, unverifiable hypotheses, and pure rant, and Stone ladles it out indiscriminately. In essence, the conspiracy theory argued here amounts to a series of inferential leaps proceeding from a speculation (that J.F.K. was killed because he wanted to pull out of Vietnam and end the Cold War). It's all bombast and misdirection, like a courtroom summation by a lawyer who knows that he can't win on the evidence. Stone comes on like a fearless radical, but his attitude toward the audience is firmly in the Hollywood tradition: he tries to bypass the intellect and go straight for the gut. The picture plays like an endless episode of "America's Most Wanted." Its hysterical manner and its slipshod handling of the facts actually have the effect of diminishing the credibility of the case for conspiracy. The clearest sounds we hear in this movie are those of Oliver Stone shooting himself in the foot. With Kevin Costner as New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, Sissy Spacek as his wife, Gary Oldman as Oswald, and an all-star cast of witnesses and conspirators.—T.R. (1/13/92) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Worldwide Cinemas, and Loews Festival.)

Madame Bovary—Calling writer-director Claude Chabrol's adaptation of the Flaubert classic Masterpiece Theatre-style moviemaking is unfair to Masterpiece Theatre: the BBC mini-series starring Francesca Annis and Tom Conti had more humor, grit, and oomph. This is the Classics Illustrated comic-book version. In two hours and eight minutes, it trots through the central plot, conveying key dialogue, descriptions, and contrasts in linked vignettes and verbal bits that would fit into thought balloons. A narrator captions what the adapter fails to picture or dramatize. Isabelle Huppert is disastrous casting in the title role. Flaubert divulged Emma Bovary's oscillations via her eyes, but Huppert's less-than-divine orbs remain impassive even when she's supposed to be galvanizing. At one point, the narrator emphasizes the "hellish recklessness" and sensuality in Emma's gaze as she tries to compel her lover Leon (Lucas Belvaux) into committing embezzlement. Yet all we see is Huppert glaring at him with mercenary intent. It's as if Chabrol were banking that viewers will disregard the evidence of their own eyes. In French.—M.S. (Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

The Mambo Kings—Oscar Hijuelos' overlong yet likable novel "The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love," about two Cuban musician brothers who emigrate to New York and land a guest spot on "I Love Lucy," should be prime fodder for the movies. But in the hands of the first-time director Arne Glimcher it becomes the worst sort of varnished kitsch. Glimcher and his screenwriter, Cynthia Cidre, ransack old movies for corner-cutting devices and use them to jack up Hijuelos' nostalgic evocations of the fifties. The result is overpoweringly ersatz—"The Cotton Club" with a Cuban accent. Armand Assante is the fiery brother, Antonio Banderas the sensitive one, Maruschka Detmers a book-reading beauty, and Cathy Moriarty a slangy, sexy cigarette gal. They're all encouraged to be icons; only the engagingly salty and good-humored Moriarty breaks her assigned mold. With Roscoe Lee Browne as a gangster, and cameos by Celia Cruz (as a small-club owner) and Tito Puente (as himself). Michael Ballhaus provided the gaudy, inexpressive cinematography and Stuart Wurtzel the lavish production design.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews New York Twin, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Loews Orpheum VII, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through April 2.)

A Man Escaped (1956)—In this country, escape is a theme for action movies, but the French director Robert Bresson is famous for his uncompromising methods, and having been a prisoner of the Nazis himself, he is not disposed to treat his material—André Devigny's account of his escape from the Montluc fortress prison—lightly. Bresson's hero's ascetic, single-minded dedication to escape is almost mystic, and the fortress constitutes a world as impersonal and as isolated as Kafka's. The movie was shot at Montluc with fanatic authenticity; the photography, by Léonce-Henry Burel, is austerely beautiful. François Leterrier, a Sorbonne philosophy student, is the lead. The music is Mozart's Mass in C Minor. All this makes it sound terribly pretentious, yet sometimes even the worst ideas can be made to work. It's a marvellous movie. In French.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; April 7-8.)

Morning Glory (1933)—Katharine Hepburn got her first Academy Award for her performance as Eva Lovelace—the name taken by a girl who comes to New York obsessively determined to become a great actress. It's a strange, ambivalent study of that lying-cheating kind of determination, taken from a play by Zoë Akins and directed by Lowell Sherman. With Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and Adolphe Menjou.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; April 8.)

Moulin Rouge (1953)—It's hard to believe this was made by the John Huston who made "The Maltese Falcon." That was lean; this is fatty (and soft at the center). It's a biography of Toulouse-Lautrec (José Ferrer, standing on his knees in tricky boots). With visual re-creations that are often extraordinary. But the script, by Anthony Veiller and Huston, based on Pierre LaMure's book, has been conceived in a de-luxe style and takes itself very seriously. It's a pompous movie. Ferrer speaks with a weird, rolling accent and recites his epigrams and his overwritten lines as if they were well memorized. With Colette Marchand, Suzanne Flow, and Zsa Zsa Gabor as Jane Avril, singing the famous Georges Auric theme song in a dubbed voice. (Gabor is radiantly pretty, though her gestures while she pretends to sing are idiotic.) Ferrer also plays Lautrec's father—a tall, unfeeling aristocrat. Oswald Morris was the cinematographer; Eliot Elisofon was the color consultant; Paul Sheriff was the art director; the costumes are by Marcel Vertes.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; April 6.)

Noises Off—With Michael Caine, directed by Peter Bogdanovich. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village East Cinemas, Cinema I, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex. Matinées only. . . . ¶ Murray Hill Cinemas. Evenings only. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin; through April 2, evenings only. . . . ¶ Embassy 1; through April 2.)

Ordet (1955)—Carl Dreyer made at least two emotionally overpowering great films—"The Passion of Joan of Arc" and "Day of Wrath." He also made the visually and conceptually daring "Vampyr." But "Ordet," which the world press greeted as his masterpiece, may be considerably less than that. Kaj Munk, author of the play, was a Danish pastor, famed for such statements as "It is better that Denmark's relations with Germany should suffer than that her relations with Jesus Christ should suffer." In 1944, the Nazis shot him through the head and tossed him in a ditch. His play, written on the text "O ye of little faith," deals with a modern Resurrection, and Dreyer treats it with extreme literalness. Some of us may find it difficult to accept the holy-madman protagonist (driven insane by too close study of Kierkegaard!), and even more difficult to accept Dreyer's use of the protagonist's home as a stage set for numerous entrances and exits, and altogether impossible to get involved in the factional strife between bright, happy Christianity and dark, gloomy Christianity—represented as they are by people sitting around drinking vast quantities of coffee. In Danish.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; April 7-8.)

The Prince of Tides—Barbra Streisand's film, adapted from Pat Conroy's 1986 novel, is a big, earnest psychoanalytic soap opera. It's a story in which people come to terms with their past, make peace with the demons that have haunted them since childhood, learn how to let go of the "dysfunctional" emotional patterns inflicted on them by their parents, and become sensitive, caring human beings. Streisand treats this banal material affectionately, even reverently, but it plays better on the screen than it does on the page. Her direction is smooth and canny, and she has distilled the novel to its corn-based essence. But the fumes of the book's terrible ideas linger in the air. After a while, everything begins to feel predictable. Conroy's narrative method (he co-wrote the screenplay, with Becky Johnston) consists of establishing characters who embody common stereotypes, setting them in motion around each other, and then watching them follow the courses that he's mapped for them: his message is one of change and liberation, but his characters' orbits are fixed. As the soul-searching hero, Tom Wingo, Nick Nolte bears the weight of all the movie's ambitions, and, for the most part, he carries his burden with miraculous grace. Streisand plays a sympathetic New York psychiatrist and never seems to get the hang of the role, but most of the cast performs heroically: Blythe Danner, as Tom's wife, and Kate Nelligan, as his mother, are wonderful. This is an admirably scrupulous job of literary adaptation; it's the material that's dysfunctional.—T.R. (1/27/92) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Shadows and Fog—With Woody Allen, directed by Allen. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews Tower East, and Loews Columbus Circle.)

The Sunshine Boys (1975)—Neil Simon's extended sketch about two quarrelsome vaudevillians (Walter Matthau and George Burns) who, eleven years back, broke up their forty-three years together and haven't spoken to each other since; they're brought together to appear on a TV special. It's all one-liners. Matthau keeps blasting us with his bullhorn voice; Burns has the repose of a tortoise, his eyes gleaming and alert, and he has a rhythmed formality in his conversation, as an old trouper might. (He was rewarded with the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor.) The director, Herbert Ross, doesn't bring enough invention to the material, and it's just shouting, when it needs to be beautifully timed routines. (It was a big hit, though.) With Richard Benjamin.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; April 2.)

This Is My Life—The first film directed by the novelist and screenwriter Nora Ephron is a modest, uninsistent family comedy about a single mom from Queens who becomes a famous standup comic and, in the process, strains her relationship with her two young daughters. The movie is consistently good-humored without ever being really funny; the scenes float by on a lulling current of amiability and mild perkiness, and nothing surprising or incongruous bobs up. The picture's wispy, genial not-badness is a little puzzling, because both the material and the cast are strong enough to support a much sturdier and more satisfying piece of entertainment. The script, by the director and her sister Delia, drastically compresses a good 1988 novel (called "This Is Your Life") by Meg Wolitzer; the story emerges from the screenwriters' rapid-weight-loss clinic dazed, unused to its new lightness. The heroine is played by the wonderful, raspy-voiced Julie Kavner, and Samantha Mathis and Gaby Hoffmann, the young actresses who play her daughters, are lively and skillful; none of the performers leave a memorable impression, though. Ephron doesn't go for big vulgar laughs or big vulgar emotions. Most of the time, it's hard to tell exactly what she is going for: the discreet, temperate tone doesn't betray any sense of urgency or purpose. The movie's lack of drive is frustrating, and its well-manneredness is oddly out of keeping with the subject matter. The picture doesn't have the steel or the shamelessness that good comedians need. It's all buildup and no payoff—a shaggy-dog story, not a killer routine.—T.R. (3/9/92) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Wayne's World—"Saturday Night Live" has become a repackaging industry. The extended antics of vidiot savants Wayne Campbell (Mike Myers) and Garth Algar (Dana Carvey) betray the same slapped-together quality as the TV specials "Toonces, the Cat Who Could Drive a Car" and "Saturday Night Live Goes Commercial," though the film is not as entertaining. Seen in five-minute spurts on "S.N.L.," beaming out their cable-access program from Wayne's basement, these two come off as cracked bellwethers of the Next Big Things of suburban youth culture, Hard Rock Division. (Their pre-"Truth or Dare" show with Madonna was a classic.) In the movie, Myers still boasts his inexplicably confident and cheery expressions—he's a mischievous smile button. But Carvey overworks his twisted mouth. Wayne and Garth weren't meant to be frozen on celluloid the way they are in this parody of coöptation, which casts them as victims of a manipulative commercial-TV promoter (Rob Lowe). Here they function as leaders of a nostalgia-fest for audiences with short attention spans, paying homage to, yes, "Terminator 2" as well as syndicated TV favorites like "Laverne and Shirley" and "Mission: Impossible." (Sadly, the Tooncinator fails to make a guest appearance.) Carvey has one good bit, playing out a murder with some frosted crullers, and the ever-game Lowe musters up a funny walk after a cop gives him a heavy frisk. Penelope Spheeris directed, from a script by Myers, Bonnie Turner, and Terry Turner.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

White Men Can't Jump—With Wesley Snipes and Woody Harrelson, directed by Ron Shelton. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Bay Cinema, Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

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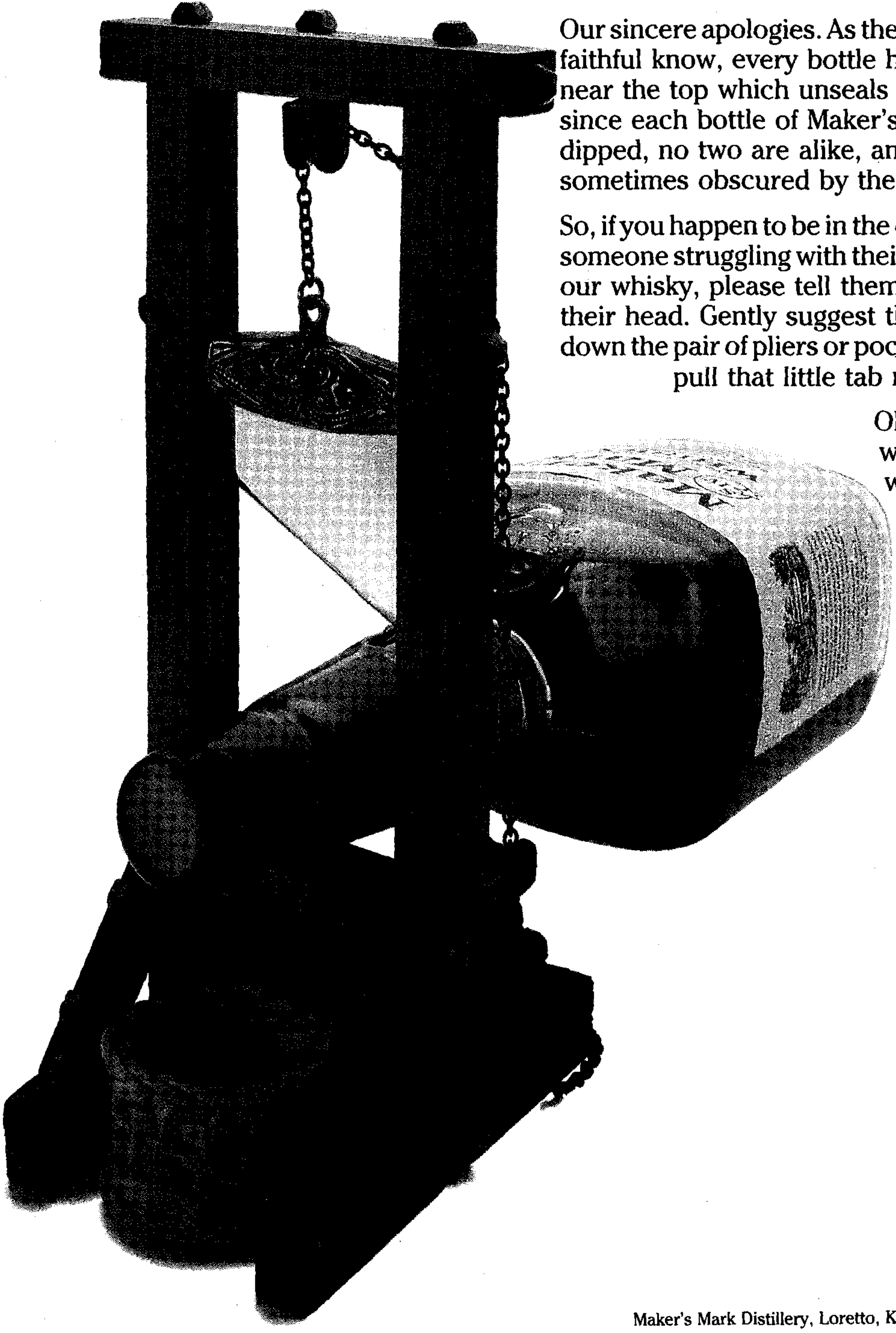

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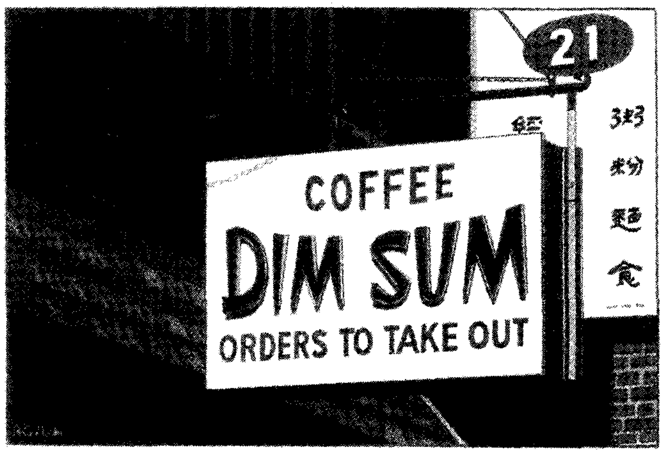
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

WHEN Thurgood Marshall stepped down from the Supreme Court, it marked the passing of a generation of black civil-rights lawyers who, in the words of one observer, "linked the passion of Frederick Douglass demanding black freedom and of William Du Bois demanding black equality to the undelivered promises of the Constitution of the United States." Marshall was perhaps the most visible member of that generation, but its key figure—a lawyer who in many ways pioneered the idea of using the Constitution to promote racial justice—was a man named Charles Hamilton Houston, who is today largely unknown.

The grandson of slaves, Houston was born in Washington, D.C., in 1895, attended segregated public schools there, and then went off to Amherst College, in Massachusetts, from which he graduated, magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, in 1915. After serving as a lieutenant in the Army during the First World War, Houston attended Harvard Law School, became the first black member of the law review, and earned his LL.B. in 1922 and a doctorate in 1923. Over the next dozen years, first as a teacher at Howard University Law School and later as its dean, he became one of America's preëminent legal educators, and he transformed an unaccredited night program into an accredited full-time institution with a national reputation for training black civil-rights lawyers. "A lawyer's either a social engineer or a parasite on society," he used to tell his Howard students.



No armchair academic, Houston was himself a brilliant trial lawyer and social engineer. When he started practice, in 1924, federal and state laws imposed racial segregation throughout American life. Eleven years later, he became special counsel to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and in that post he devised the long-range legal strategy that ultimately led the Supreme Court, in Brown v. Board of Education, to declare such laws contrary to the Constitution. Thurgood Marshall, one of Houston's star pupils, briefed and argued the Brown decision, and credited Houston with being "the engineer of all of it."

In 1896, the Supreme Court had sanctioned segregation in the Plessy v. Ferguson ruling, which upheld a Louisiana statute requiring separate but equal railroad cars for white and black passengers. Houston decided to take Plessy at its word. His idea was to begin by proving that certain segregated institutions provided separate but unequal facilities for blacks and were therefore unconstitutional. If he attacked segregated institutions one by one, he believed, he could gradually build up a string of precedents, with each new test case building on the previous ones. His hope was that the accumulation of decisions would ultimately demonstrate that separate facilities were *inherently* unequal, thus exposing the illogic of Plessy. In carrying out this strategy, Houston himself briefed, argued, and won several important Supreme Court cases, including Gaines v. Missouri, which outlawed the University of Missouri's policy of providing a law school for white but not black students, and Shelley v. Kraemer, which prohibited the enforcement of racially restrictive covenants in residential housing.

Houston died in 1950, four years before the Supreme Court decided the Brown case and made his vision a reality. He seems to have worked himself to death, spending eighteen-hour days trying cases, planning N.A.A.C.P. strategy, teaching at Howard, and also speaking widely and writing on civil-rights issues. After his death, another black Amherst alumnus, Federal Judge William Hastie, said, "He guided us through the legal wilderness of second-class citizenship. He was truly the Moses of that journey. He lived to see us close to the promised land of full equality under the law."

We thought of Houston earlier this year when Clarence Thomas, upon succeeding Thurgood Marshall on the Supreme Court, wrote his first important dissenting opinion as a justice. The case, Hudson v. McMillian, involved the treatment of inmates at the state penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana. In 1983, prison guards handcuffed and shackled the petitioner, a black man named Keith Hudson, removed him from his cell, and beat him on the mouth, eyes, chest, and stomach, while their supervisor told them "not to have too much fun." Hudson later sued the guards for violation of his constitutional rights, and won eight hundred dollars in damages. The guards appealed, and the case gradually worked its way to the Supreme Court. The justices voted, 7-2, in Hudson's favor, but Justice Thomas, joined by Justice Antonin Scalia, dissented. Though the blows caused Hudson's face to swell, loosened his teeth, and cracked his dental plate, Thomas wrote that he should not have been awarded damages, because his injuries were only "minor." Thomas conceded that "abusive behavior by prison guards is deplorable," but nevertheless implied that such misconduct by prison guards, unless it causes "serious injury," can be viewed as simply part of the "harsh conditions of prison life."

Reflecting on this opinion by Marshall's successor, we recalled some words of Marshall's mentor. A few months before Houston died, he taped a message for his five-year-old son. "I am . . . concerned . . . that the Negro . . . not be content simply with demanding an equal share in the existing system," he said. "It seems to me that his fundamental responsibility and his historical challenge is to use his weight, since he has less to lose in the present system than anybody else or any other group, to make sure that the system which shall survive in the United States of America . . . shall be a system which guarantees justice and freedom for everyone."

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The Sleep Room

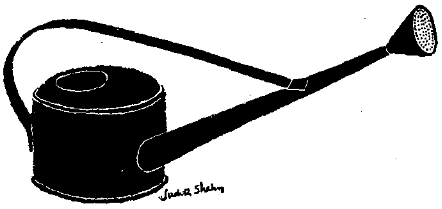
A COUPLE of weeks ago, we dialled a wrong number. After several rings, a man with a gruff voice answered and, when we asked for a friend of ours, said, "I don't care who you want. All I know is you just woke up six sleeping railroad engineers." In the following days, we puzzled over our mistake. Where is it possible, we wondered, to rouse half a dozen trainmen with a single call? We began calling railroad people in an attempt to find out, and J. J. Price, a New Jersey Transit trainmaster, told us. Federal law, it seems, guarantees train workers four hours' "undisturbed rest" a day, and New Jersey Transit meets its obligation by keeping a room at the Ramada Hotel, across the street from Pennsylvania Station. "Think of it as New Jersey Transit's bedroom," Mr. Price said. "Some of the guys call it the suite, but it's nothing lavish—just some easy chairs and couches in the dark. Actually, there are mostly chairs and a trainman who gets a couch is considered lucky."

Hoping to learn more about the engineers' sleeping arrangements, we visited Mr. Price in his office, in Penn Station. "I like working here," Mr. Price said. "But for thirteen years I was a conductor, and I used to have some good times over in the sleep room. But mostly the arrangement is functional. Crews come in from their morning run and they're exhausted. We can have as many as forty men at a time in there. They've spent the last four hours scanning the distance for signals and stations. Their routes play through their heads like old movies, and they just need a dark place to lie down in. Some guys hardly ever use it—they refresh themselves by jogging, or going to a museum. But when I was a conductor I preferred to wake up by going to sleep."

We remarked that the idea of forty men sleeping away the afternoon in a single room seemed fantastic, and Mr. Price said, "Is it any stranger than spending a whole day in an office? Anyway, it's not as if we were running a model train out there. Crews have to be incredibly alert for long stretches of time." He interrupted himself to say, "Here comes Mr. Jordan." A large, red-faced man with gray hair came in. "He's been riding the railroad for over forty years," Mr. Price told us. "He's an engineer on the Long Branch line."

Mr. Jordan sat down in an orange swivel chair. We asked him how well he knew the sleep room.

"As well as anybody," he said, in a voice that rumbled like a freight train. "I'm what you'd call a regular. I'm not young anymore, and I need a good rest before my afternoon ride." He looked at his watch. "I hope I get over there early enough to get a couch. I like to sprawl out."



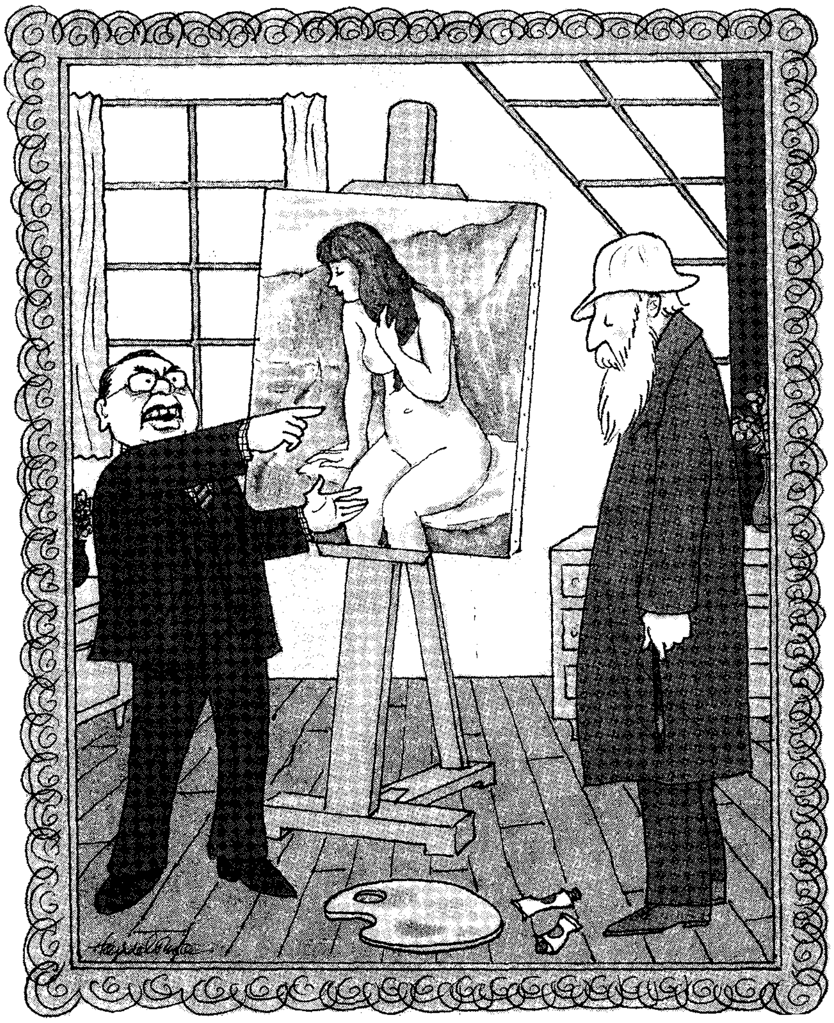
We asked Mr. Jordan if he ever dreamed in the sleep room.

"I just shut my eyes," he told us. "If I dream about anything, it's the old railroad. I started out as a fireman, but that job doesn't exist anymore. They got rid of it in '62, and I was bumped up to engineer. I was more scared than happy. I'd been sort of just watching, but then, suddenly, I was alone at the controls. Since then, I've memorized hundreds of trees along my route. You learn that stuff early on. When you're young, you're wide awake and you have energy. I used to be on the extra list all the time." He explained that the extra list was a list of people who could be called on to substitute for crewmen who were sick or on vacation, and that extra-listers often ran trains for weeks at a time. "When the extra-listers are on a long run, they need the sleep room more than any of the rest of us," he said. "It's the closest thing they have to a home. They're in New York one day and Atlantic City the next. They're tired and beaten, and they long for the suite. It's a young man's game." He looked at his hands. "Any way you figure, the railroad man has a tough life," he went on. "His wife must be a saint. He rides all night and is dead all day, and even his bedroom isn't with her. It's in a dark corner of a city hotel, and he shares it with dozens of other railroad men."

Mr. Jordan stood up, saying, "I better get across the street. I got to get myself a couch. Some folks can curl up on a picket fence, but I need to stretch out." He made a quick exit.

After some discussion, Mr. Price reluctantly agreed to take us over to the suite. It proved to be at the end of a long corridor on the Ramada's fifteenth floor. As we approached it, his voice fell to a whisper. "I try to be sensitive," he said. "When I was a conductor, anything could break my nap—a jackhammer in the street, the sound of a distant TV." He looked sharply at us. "There's to be no talking inside," he said.

We entered cautiously. The windows were covered with thick curtains, and the room's only light came from a silent TV set. Though it was hard to make out details, we could detect certain shapes. The room looked like the scene of a mob hit: white sheets lay over bodies sprawled on couches and in chairs. Mr. Price led us carefully through the maze of sleepers, and eventually we spotted Mr. Jordan on a couch near the windows. His mouth was locked tight and he was frowning slightly, as if he might be guiding an engine around a particularly tricky curve, but his arms rested neatly at his sides. He was completely stretched out.



PIERRE-AUGUSTE RENOIR
Portrait of the Artist Rebuked by Jesse Helms

Witnesses

THE New-York Historical Society has opened an exhibition that celebrates with uncommon vividness a happy episode in the history of this so often troubled city—the design and construction, in the early years of the nineteenth century, of our elegant little City Hall. Not that the building struck New Yorkers of that day as little; except for the spires of Trinity Church and St. Paul's Chapel, it was the highest structure in town—in effect, our first skyscraper. Sightseers willingly paid a fee to mount several flights of stairs to its windowed cupola, from which they could gaze out over a metropolis of almost a hundred thousand people.

New York, which was already the most populous city in the country, and the most prosperous as well, possessed a lively sense of the ordinariness of its architecture compared with that of such rival cities as Philadelphia and Boston. To help correct this obvious civic defect, the Common Council (roughly the equivalent of our present City Council) advertised, in February, 1802, a competition for the design of a new city hall and courthouse. Architectural competitions were then a novelty; among the few precedents were competitions that had been held in Washington in 1792, at Thomas Jefferson's suggestion, for the design of the capitol and of the President's house. (Using a pseudonym, Jefferson submitted a design for the latter. It was rejected.) A New York newspaper saluted the city-hall competition with an exhortation: "Ancient republics were particularly attentive to the splendor of public edifices, as monuments of national pride and dignity. We hope therefore that the contemplated improvement may be such, as will do credit to the taste and spirit of our corporation and citizens."

Twenty-six designs were submitted in the competition. The winning design, awarded a prize of three hundred and fifty dollars, was the joint handiwork of John McComb, Jr. (1763-1853), and Joseph François Mangin (1771?-1818?). Among the losers was Benjamin Latrobe, the most gifted professional architect in the country, and he was still nursing his wrath when, three years later, he wrote to his brother, "I presented a design for the new City Hall at New York. It was I think my best design. It was rejected and a vile, heterogeneous composition in the style of Charles IX of France or Queen Elizabeth of England was adopted . . . the invention of a New York bricklayer and a St. Domingo Frenchman in partnership. I am vexed beyond expression at the circumstances, for this vile thing is now slowly rising from the ground, and will occupy one of the grandest situations in the world."

Latrobe had indeed submitted an exquisite design, a perspective rendering of which is on view in the current exhibition. Still, he was far too harsh on McComb, who had been for many years the leading architect-builder in New York, and on Mangin, who, wherever he was born, had evidently received excellent architectural training. The initial design for the city hall combined French and English neoclassical influences. McComb was put in charge of the construction, which was begun in 1803 and completed in 1812; gradually, over the years, he modified the design to make it more English than French, yet to this day it strongly resembles the hôtel de ville of some proud city in the heart of France.

For reasons of economy, the building had to be somewhat reduced in size; moreover, although the prominent south, east, and west façades were sheathed in costly marble, the north façade was sheathed in comparatively cheap brownstone. It has often been said that brownstone was employed on the rear of the building because it was thought that the city would never expand beyond City Hall, and so the sorry substitute wouldn't be noticed. This is nonsense: so confident were those early New Yorkers of their city's future growth that even before City Hall was finished the Common Council approved a plan to impose a formal gridiron of streets and avenues all the way up the island to a then imaginary 155th Street. In fact, in constructing City Hall's rear wall of brownstone the builders were simply adopting what is still a common practice—the use of inferior materials on the least conspicuous portions of a building.

Master carpenters and masons engaged in putting up City Hall were paid four dollars a day; as architect and superintendent, McComb was paid six dollars a day. Because the building contained five courtrooms, some appropriate exterior sign of their presence was called for. An Irish-born sculptor, John Dixey, was paid three hundred and ten dollars to create the female figure of Justice that stood holding a stillyard—a kind of scales—on a pedestal at the top of the cupola. (Unlike most such allegorical figures, this Justice was not blindfolded; plainly, she wished to make sure that the stillyard was accurate.) The total cost of the building came to $498,634—a prodigious sum at the time.

From the moment it opened, the building was hailed as one of the handsomest in the country; nevertheless, because room had to be found from one generation to the next for an ever-growing bureaucracy, it was often threatened with demolition on the usual "practical" ground that it had outlived its usefulness. The five courtrooms were moved to the so-called Tweed courthouse, completed in the eighteen-seventies, directly to the north of City Hall. The gravest threat to the building came in the opening years of this century; it was saved, presumably forever, when the skyscraping Municipal Building was built for the bureaucratic overflow.

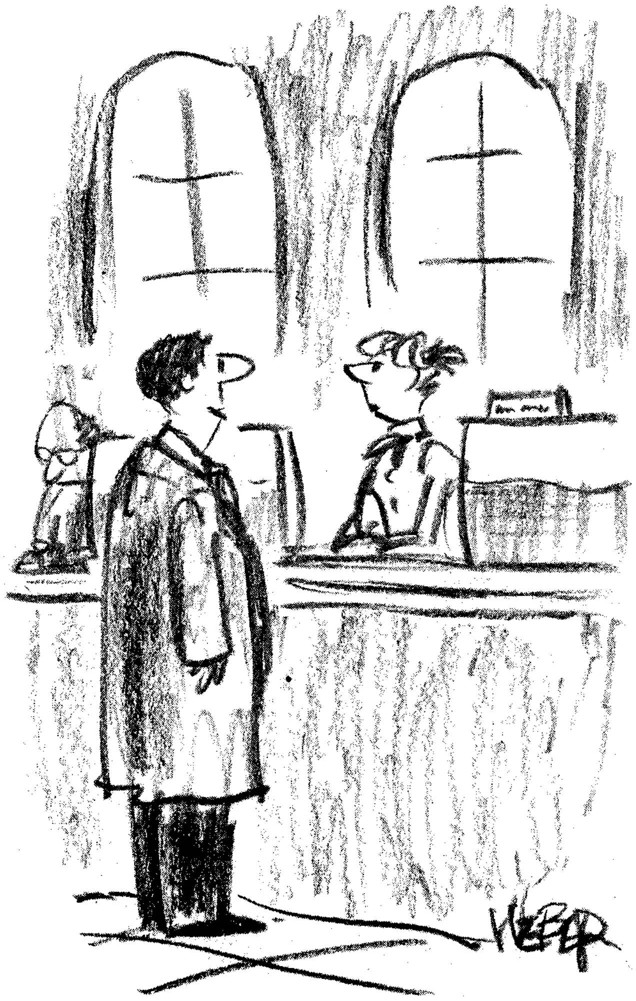
As the exhibition at the New-York Historical Society points out, our City Hall was one of the first public buildings in the country to be given a park setting. McComb planted the area with willows, poplars, and elms, and surrounded it with an ornate iron-and-stone fence. Universally admired though it was, the park, like City Hall, was continuously in jeopardy. In 1875, its southern quadrant was usurped by a brutally overscaled, mansard-roofed post-office building. That was not removed until around 1940. A pleasing circular fountain now occupies part of the post-office site. By a fortunate freak of circumstance, one can stand in the park today and take in at a glance four of the most precious structures that we New Yorkers possess, and, as it happens, they are representative of three centuries of our history: in order of age, St. Paul's Chapel, City Hall, the Brooklyn Bridge, and the Woolworth Building. There they stand, witnesses that, though mute, have much to say.

Dancers at the Bar

O'Neals' Baloon, the comfortable old bar across from Lincoln Center, closed its doors a year ago, and the place has been boarded up ever since. Passersby occasionally stop and peer through the dirt-fogged windows, wondering, perhaps, if some new restaurant is going to spring up there. Recently, we peered through the windows, wondering something else: Where was the painting?

O'Neals' had a much-loved painting—a large (eight feet by sixteen) group portrait of thirty-three figures, almost all of them ballet dancers, sitting, standing, or otherwise arranged around O'Neals' big bar. The portrait was painted sometime in the early seventies—glory days for ballet, particularly at Lincoln Center. The New York City Ballet was by then firmly installed in the New York State Theatre. And the Metropolitan Opera House had American Ballet Theatre and also the annual seasons of England's Royal Ballet, with Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev scooping up hearts nightly.

Those were the three companies that dominated this painting, mostly with their younger dancers. We remembered Peter Martins in the right-hand corner, looking very young and blond and Danish. In 1969, he had moved over to City Ballet from the Royal Danish Ballet. Also from City Ballet were Patricia McBride and Jean-Pierre Bonnefous—they got married soon after the painting was done—and Edward Villella, with his big, ear-to-ear grin. From the Royal Ballet came the young Anthony Dowell, sitting on a stool and looking very serious. And there were plenty of other Royal dancers in the painting. In those days, the Royal was very much a part of the New York ballet scene. People thought



"I'd like to bounce a check."

of it as almost another New York company.

Where had the painting gone? We went to see Mike O'Neal, who, with his brother Pat, owned O'Neals' Baloon. The two men still own The Ginger Man, another Lincoln Center hangout, and that's where we ran Mike to ground. "The painting's in the basement here," he said. "I wish I could show it to you, but it's all wrapped up, and the basement is chaos. Pots, pans, soda fountains—you don't want to know. It was Pat's wife, Cynthia, who got the idea for that painting. She was a decorator—she designed O'Neals' Baloon with my wife—and she was also a big ballet fan, and was friends with all the dancers. The Baloon was always full of dancers, because it was right across from the State Theatre. They could run over for a burger and then run right back. So we had this friend Bob Crowl, who was a painter, and Cynthia got him to do the painting. We stuck a big canvas up on the wall. Bob painted the bar first, and then he put us in—Pat and Cynthia and me and my wife and Dick Harvey, who was the manager then, and also the Baloon's maître d', Speed Stone. I remember we had a kind of meeting about where you wanted to be and whom you wanted to be next to. Then Bob painted the dancers in, one by one. They'd come in in the morning—maybe one or two sittings—and he'd stick them in."

What did you have to do to be picked?

"I think you had to be a brilliant dancer," Mike said, "and you had to know Cynthia."

Mike introduced us to Jim Enzel, who is now the director of operations for the O'Neal brothers' restaurants, and who succeeded Harvey as the manager of O'Neals' Baloon. "That was some bar," he recalled. "Every night, you'd have Robert Irving, City Ballet's chief conductor, there, in his tuxedo, and next to him would be three or four dancers, and next to them the stagehands, in their sneakers. At 'Nutcracker' time, you'd have kids running around, too. It was terrific—artists, movie people, regular people. You'd come up to the bar, and there would be a fur coat talking to a guy in bluejeans. I'd say that in my restaurant experience that was one of the best-choreographed bars in New York."

Though the painting is in the basement, the O'Neals have a large color photograph of it hanging over Table 84, in a cozy side room at The Ginger Man. "It's a no-smoking room except when Peter Martins comes in," Mike said. "Then, if nobody minds, it's a smoking room." We went over and took a look at the photograph. There, right where we remembered them, were Martins and Villella, McBride and Bonnefous. And there was Robert Irving, staring dolefully outward. But who were the others? Mike couldn't remember. "Ask Cynthia," he suggested. "She was the ballet fan."

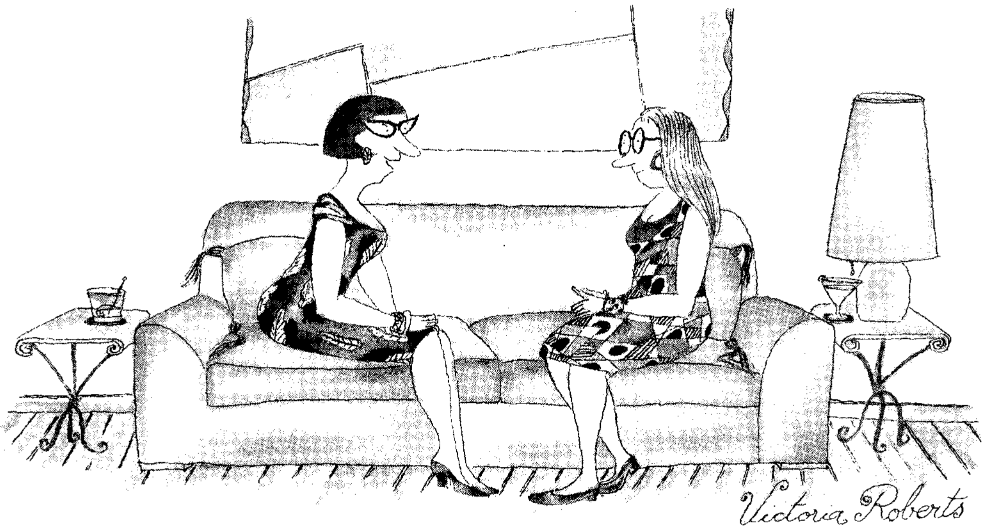
"Well, that's Carol Sumner," said Cynthia O'Neal, leaning over Table 84 a few days later. "And that's Tony Blum, and that's John Prinz. He was something, John Prinz—very reckless and wild, always running around with a red bandanna around his head. That's Sara Leland in the miniskirt, and that's Patty McBride in midi-and-boots treatment. They all look so sixties! And there's John Clifford and Karin von Aroldingen and Kay Mazzo and Mimi Paul and Marnee Morris and Helgi Tomasson. Boy, does Helgi look young! Anyway, those people were all from City Ballet. Then, from A.B.T., you've got Dennis Nahat. He's the one with all the hair sticking out. And there's Cynthia Gregory, with her old nose. From the Royal Ballet—let's see, now. There's David Wall and Deanne Bergsma and Ann Jenner and Wayne Eagling and Monica Mason. And that one, sitting on the bar, that's Lynn Seymour. I remember that Nureyev said to me, 'Lynn—she genius.' "

Wasn't it hard to get a likeness in just one or two sittings?

"You'd better ask Bob Crowl, the painter," Cynthia said.

"It started off, I was scared to death," Bob Crowl told us, over the telephone. "The dancers couldn't sit for long. An hour, an hour and a half. Then they'd have to run off to a rehearsal. I didn't know if I could paint that quickly. And it was done during business hours, with everybody looking on. A dancer would be sitting there on some perch, and I'd be on this landing, where the canvas was, painting away like mad. And then I'd have to run down the stairs and go out among the tables, to see what I'd done—how it looked from a distance. It was like a Marx Brothers movie. When I finished one of those sittings, I'd plop down in a chair and wouldn't be able to get up. I've never painted that quickly since. Now I take five years to finish a painting."

The O'Neal brothers plan to expand The Ginger Man soon, and when they do they are going to hang the painting on the first big wall they get. "You know what I loved about that painting?" Mike said. "When I came to work in the morning, I'd be maybe a half a block from the restaurant, and I could look in the window, and there were all these people. Maybe when I got inside, the restaurant was empty, but when I was coming up the block the place was always full."



"Call it spring cleaning—I threw out all my dictionaries."

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THE TALK IN ELIZA'S KITCHEN

Alfred Stone said, "Winterneet couldn't make it. He's off in Copenhagen."

"Oh, never mind Winterneet," said Ilka and looked gladly around the room, which was full of her new friends and colleagues at the Concordance Institute. Here were her hosts, Alfred and Alpha Stone, and there were the Ayes and the Zees and the Cones and the Bernstines. How could Ilka's back tell the difference between empty air and a body, male? Director Leslie Shakespere was standing behind Ilka, listening to his wife, Eliza, making Yvette Gordot laugh. "Your wife is terrific," Ilka said to him.

"Yes, she is," said Director Shakespere, and he and Ilka stood and listened together.

"That was before I stopped Leslie from doing all the things he likes to do," said Eliza Shakespere. She was a Canadian, built nobly and on a grand scale. Ilka admired the width of her shoulders, the length of thigh. Her hair was so very fine and so electrically charged that it attached itself to her cheeks and temples. She kept palming it away.

Alpha called everyone into the dining room. Ilka was seated between Professor Zee and Leslie Shakespere, at the furthest remove from Eliza Shakespere. Eliza was entertaining her end of the table with a highly colored anecdote about a groom who had inadvertently locked Leslie in the stables and made him miss the equestrian tryouts for the Olympics. Ilka glanced at Leslie's great head, which was brooding over his soup. "Did he really lock you in?" she asked him.

"No," said Leslie.

"Are you really an equestrian?"

"I was," said Leslie.

"No, you weren't," said Ilka, "and I can prove it."

Leslie looked at Ilka.

Ilka said, "People I sit next to at dinner are not equestrians, and I'm sitting next to you."

Leslie smiled.

Ilka said, "I can prove you never tried out for the Olympics."

Leslie laughed.

"People I know are as likely to try out for the Olympics as they are to climb Mt. Everest."

Leslie blushed.

"You climbed Mt. Everest!" Ilka said, so loudly that Eliza said, "Before I stopped him."

"Did Eliza stop you?" asked Ilka.

"As a matter of fact, she did."

At the far end of the table Eliza was embarked on a tale about the Sherpa who carried Leslie's tent out into the blinding white expanse and disappeared. "Nothing as far as the eye could see except his abominable snow prints."

Ilka felt silly asking Leslie over and over what, in Eliza's stories, was the truth. She kept looking sideways at him. He said, "It was a preliminary expedition to test new equipment and methods."

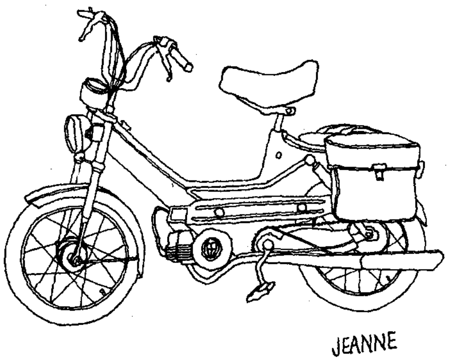
Eliza said, "And Leslie tested a new type of nylon rope by falling off a mountain and hanging upside down, spinning, and yo-yoing, at one and the same time."

Here Leslie said, "Dear, did you ask Alpha if Mrs. Beeton has a recipe for gooseberry fool? Our real-estate man showed us two gooseberry bushes in our back garden." Leslie persevered. "Did you know that growing gooseberries is forbidden in several states of the union?" And having got the left side of the table discussing "Mrs. Beeton's Cookery" and the right side listing obsolete laws that continued on the books, Leslie returned to his soup.

Ilka had looked apprehensively down the table at Eliza, who had been stopped mid-story. Eliza's head was bent low over her plate, and her eyes were hidden.

Ilka did not drive, and the Shakesperes offered to drop her off at home. She walked down the dark path with Eliza, behind Alfred Stone, who was walking the director to his car. Eliza said, "It wasn't the gooseberries out back—it was the tiny tomatoes in the front that made Leslie buy the house."

Ilka sat beside Leslie. Eliza, in the back seat, said, "Doesn't Alfred Stone look like something out of 'Steve Canyon'? The iron jaw, the jutting forelock."



Ilka said, "Alfred says Winterneet is in Copenhagen. Are we sure there really is a Winterneet?"

"There used to be, before he got his Nobel Prize," Eliza said.

Leslie said, "The State Department sends him on tours."

"But you affirm, categorically, that Winterneet exists?" asked Ilka. "I cried when I had to leave New York and come to live in Connecticut. All my friends said, 'But Winterneet lives in Concordance.' My friend Jules said he knew a fellow whose accountant used to play golf with Winterneet's lawyer. At my interview, Zack told me Winterneet gave a series of lectures at the institute the year of his Nobel Prize; Jenny drove me by his house; Mary promised to have him for dinner, but he got a cold. At the Bernstines' reception, he was on the Coast. Martin Moses asked me to a party given for the express purpose of not being stood up by Winterneet, who wasn't invited."

"Well, we knew Winterneet before he was Winterneet," said Eliza. "Winnie was our lodger. That was before the baby."

"That's my house at the corner," said Ilka. "I rent it from some people called Rasmussen. They're off on their sabbatical."

"Leslie, aren't you going to be a gentleman, like Alfred, and walk Ilka up the path to her front door?"

"Ilka, do you need to be walked to your front door?"

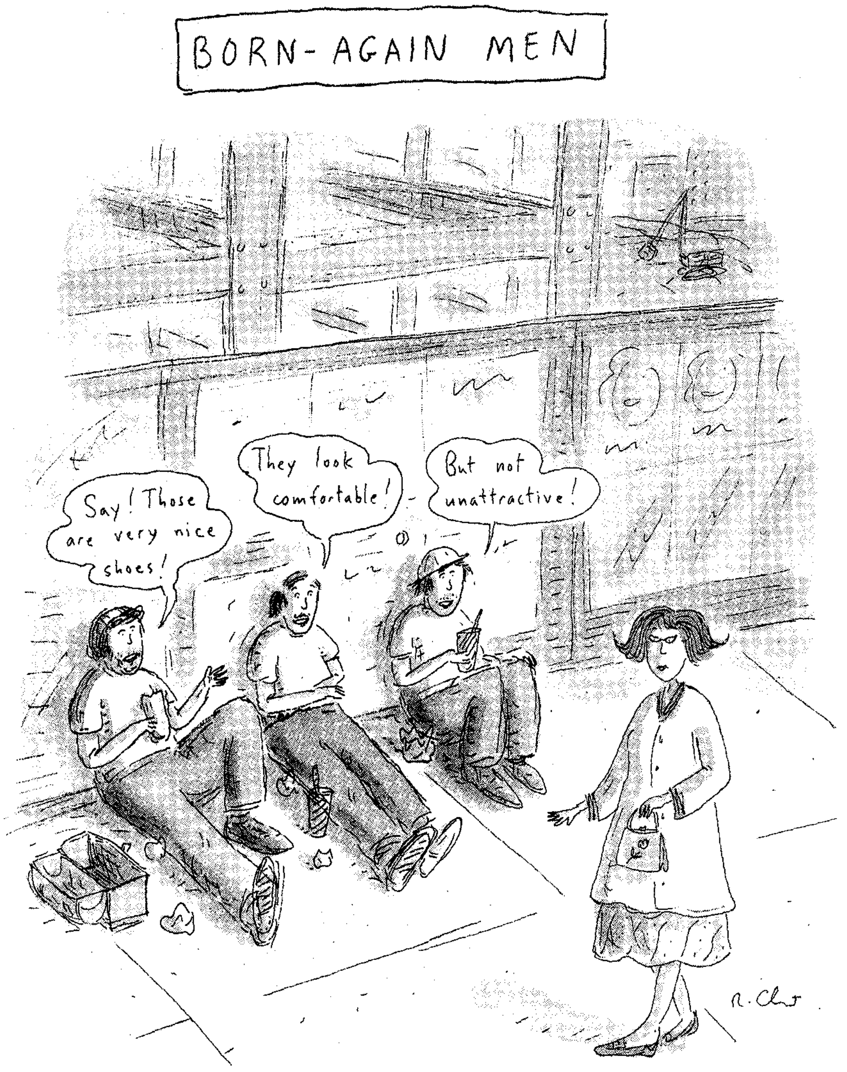
"Absolutely not," said Ilka stoutly, and Leslie invited Ilka to come to a late breakfast Sunday.

Eliza said, "Leslie means brunch, which is a word his British mouth is unable to articulate."

Ilka walked up her path in a state of happiness she had not experienced since before she left her old friends behind in New York.

Leslie called on Sunday morning. "I have chores in town. Eliza thought you might like me to pick you up on the way home."

Ilka was so pleased that she kept inventing hardships from which Leslie's kindness was going to save her, well past the point at which she perfectly


BORN-AGAIN MEN
Say! Those are very nice shoes!
They look comfortable!
But not unattractive!

understood Leslie's desire to get off the telephone.

"Is eleven a good time?"

Eleven was the perfect time; by then Ilka would have finished grading the compositions of her class in Intermediate English. "This really is amazingly good of you."

"Oh, you bet," said Leslie.

Ilka felt the intense pleasantness of sitting beside Leslie Shakespere. Also, it made her nervous. She felt obliged to entertain Leslie's silence with speech, which she hoped was interesting without being tiresomely interesting. "Do you know that delicious moment when you have finished grading your last paper, and the whole week, before you have to grade your next class, is perfectly intact in front of you?"

Leslie seemed to be thinking this over.

Ilka said, "Like the second before a holiday has had the first minute bitten out of it?"

Now Leslie had two things to think over.

Ilka said, "Like that moment in the theatre when the curtain starts going up?"

Leslie said, "I do know that moment."

Ilka decided it was up to Leslie to think of the next thing to say, but he was turning in to his driveway.

Leslie took Ilka into the kitchen to say hello to Eliza.

"Can I help?" Ilka asked her.

"Christ, no!" said Eliza. "Leslie will make Bloody Marys."

Leslie and Ilka carried their drinks into the living room. Ilka said, "I don't know how you do it, but you and Eliza make me talk. You never ask me any questions, but I tell you everything."

"That *is* odd," said Leslie. When Ilka's glass was empty he carried it out to the kitchen, and Ilka heard him say, "Ilka says we never ask her questions, but she tells us everything. She asks how do we do it?" Ilka imagined Eliza standing with her back to Leslie. She couldn't hear Eliza's answer and got up and stood in the doorway and listened, and, hearing Leslie's returning footsteps, quickly sat down.

Leslie said, "Eliza says we ask questions in the form of suppositions."

Ilka said, "The truth of the matter is that you and Eliza are accomplished listeners. You don't have my compulsion to interject something analogous from my own autobiography into the other person's story. I mean to be expressing my sympathetic understanding, but all that does is take the conversation away from the other speaker. What you do is make these little sounds like '*mm*' or '*mf*,' so that one feels you listening. Do you know what you do when somebody says something you don't like?"

"What?" asked Leslie.

"You uncross your right leg from over your left knee and cross your left leg over your right knee."

"I'll be damned," said Leslie.

"If I see you making some abrupt movement, like suddenly picking up or putting down your glass, I know I've got some common fact dead wrong."

Leslie said again that he would be damned, excused himself, and walked out into the kitchen to tell Eliza what Ilka had said. He came back and said, "Eliza says we should bring our drinks, and talk in the kitchen, where she can hear us."

Eliza once more refused Ilka's offer of help. Ilka and Leslie sat at the table while Eliza sliced and chopped and grated. The kitchen was a large room. Two snapshots, one of a little baby with a large bib, and one of an apple tree in full fruit, were stuck into the window frame.

Ilka said, "The Rasmussens' kitchen is the color of egg yolk, and full of doodads. When I moved in, I hid them all in the back of the cupboards and went shopping. I bought this beautiful Danish chopping board made of blocks of different kinds of wood."

"Did you?" said Eliza. "I fished *this* chopping board," and she pointed to a little square of oak with a cracked corner, "out of Lake Michigan in 1959."

Leslie said, "Ilka, tell Eliza what you said about the way I listen."

Ilka repeated to Eliza what she had

said, and Eliza said, "How do I listen?"

Ilka said, "You look pleased when you hear some half-truth or nonsense—you get a satisfied look, as if the world were bearing out the opinion you privately held of it." Ilka was excited to feel them listening to what she was saying; she hoped she would stop talking. She said, "In the months I've known you I've told you all my stories, but I know very little about *you*," and she asked what Eliza had meant about asking questions in the form of suppositions.

Eliza said, "If you asked me point-blank how I lost my thirteen-month-old baby"—here Leslie got out of his chair and walked to the sink and stood beside Eliza—"I'd say what my rotten little American cousins used to say to me, like 'Mind your own beeswax' or 'That's for me to know and for you to find out.' But if you said, 'It was in April, wasn't it?' I might say, 'April 15th, and one of those lovely-looking days.' " Eliza walked to the refrigerator. Leslie stayed beside her. "It *looked* warm, or maybe I *wanted* the Chicago winter to be over. When we got outside it was good and chilly." Leslie walked to the stove with Eliza. "I put the brakes on the stroller and ran inside, and got the baby's blanket, which I had already washed and put away. A box of mothballs fell out, and I ran and got the broom and dustpan, and I will drive Leslie crazy telling you the whole story."

"Which is what my mother does!" said Ilka. "She tells the whole story of how she left my father sitting by the road just outside Obernpest, the week before the end of the war, and she never saw him again."

"I DID it again!" said Ilka in the car. "I told my father story and stopped Eliza from telling the story about the baby! How long ago was this?"

"It will be fourteen years next April 15th."

"Doesn't that take some of the pain away?"

Leslie thought about that and said, "It seemed intolerable when it happened, and it seems intolerable today."

Ilka silently resented the Shakesperes' intolerable loss. She imagined it as a wound in their lives, a flaw in their every pleasure. This flawed the pleasure Ilka wanted to be at liberty to feel when she was with them. Ilka wanted that baby unlost.

ITEMIZED EXPENSES

(AUGUST STRINDBERG, 1849-1912)

Some twenty reams of Lessebo paper, the Beehive grade.
About three hundred English steel nibs.
Three wives, plus children.
Tar and upkeep for a fishing dory.
Twenty-two rented city apartments (different cities),
furnished and unfurnished.
Two hundred and eighty-three boarding-house rooms.
Fifteen rented summer cottages.
Roughly ten thousand books,
pages cut and read, as well as
five thousand pages of proof sheets.
Twenty thousand kilometres by train.
Two hundred and fifty used-up friends.
Twenty-four exhausted translators.
Twenty-two thousand acting hours.
At least ten enemies disgraced forever.
Microscopes, oil, paints, camera lenses.
Three hundred and fifty francs' worth of retorts and
chemicals,
three hundred twenty kilometres of walks
(of which two hundred and three on Östermalm).

An eagle's feather; half a sheet of paper.

—LARS GUSTAFSSON

(*Translated, from the Swedish, by Yvonne L. Sandstroem.*)

• •

BEFORE he left her off at her gate, Leslie invited Ilka to breakfast next Sunday. Again he called and offered to pick her up. Again Ilka worried about not helping, but Eliza wanted them to sit and drink their Bloody Marys and talk in the kitchen, where she could hear them. And she said, "Winnie's back. He wanted to come for brunch, but I said we had other plans."

"I'll phone him later," said Leslie.

"I told him to come and get his boxes," Eliza said.

"What's Winterneet like?" asked Ilka.

"Looks like something out of 'Peanuts,' " replied Eliza. "A swelled head walking on his little shoes."

"You don't like him?" asked Ilka doubtfully.

Leslie said, "Winterneet and the Bernstines are our oldest American friends."

"How did you meet him?" asked Ilka.

Leslie said, "When we were graduate students in Chicago. Winnie was an assistant professor—"

"—and already polishing his Nobel Prize acceptance speech," Eliza said.

Leslie uncrossed and recrossed his legs and reached for his glass. He said, "We were short of money. Winnie's first marriage was breaking up, and he moved in with us—"

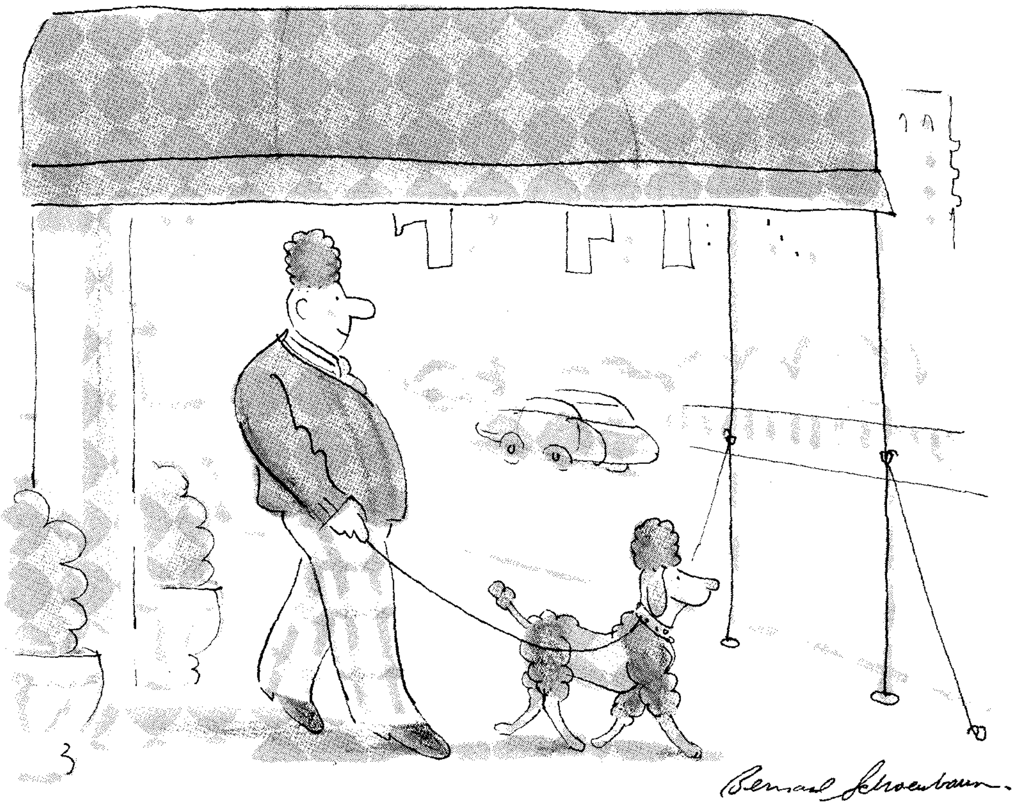
"—and, having spread his papers over every surface of every room in our apartment," Eliza said, "he moved out."

"He moved in with his second wife, Dorothy," said Leslie.

Eliza said, "Leslie collected all the papers in one cardboard box, which stood in our little hallway all summer and fall. Came the first snow, I put it out in the driveway."

"You didn't!" said Ilka.

"Yes, I did," said Eliza.



Ilka looked at Leslie, who said, "She did."

"Leslie brought it back inside and put it up in his study. When Winnie left Dorothy he brought us his second box of papers."

Presently, Leslie stood up, handling his car keys inside his jacket pocket. Ilka said, "I love it that you let a person know when you've had enough."

"Always the gentleman," said Eliza.

"It means that I can sit and enjoy myself without worrying about whether the time has come for me to go home. Eliza and Leslie, I want to make you a proposition: May I elect you to be my cousins? I'm low on the kind one has by blood."

Leslie and Eliza agreed to be Ilka's elective cousins, and Eliza invited her to come over after dinner, Saturday. The Bernstines were dropping by for drinks. Leslie said he would pick Ilka up.

SATURDAY, and Ilka walked into the Shakesperes' living room. On a chair, with a drink in his hand, sat a man whose thinning hair was the color, exactly, of the expanse of his cranium. His shoes were child-size. It was the actual Winterneet, regarding Ilka with a smile that revealed a small, charming gap between his two front teeth. Ilka felt looked at longer than was comfortable. She lowered her eyes, raised them, and the actual Winterneet was still smiling. He was taking her in. Now came the Bernstines, and Leslie bringing drinks, and Eliza with a platter of what Winterneet, with his delightful smile, persisted in calling "the eats."

Ilka meant to keep looking intelligently engaged in a conversation that these old friends must have been having for the past two decades. Once in a while Leslie threw Ilka a scrap of data, a gloss on a name. "It was Frank who introduced Dorothy and Winterneet in— Winnie, was that in '63 or '64? Dorothy was Edwin's half sister," Leslie explained. The phone rang and Leslie walked out into the hall.

" '63," said Eliza. "We had the baby in '64." Ilka observed Joe Bernstine plant his hands on the arms of his chair, ready to rise. She saw Jenny's forehead corrugate.

"It was in '65, Winnie, that we moved your two boxes to Amherst along with our things," said Eliza, and Joe settled back; Jenny still looked anxious.

Winterneet said, "When I get back from London, I'll come over and spend the day, and sort out what I want to throw away."

Leslie returned and said, "It's Una. She's at Kennedy."

Eliza said, "Tell her no."

Leslie said, "She just got in from London."

Eliza said, "No."

Leslie went out.

Joe Bernstine asked, "And how is our little Una?"

"I was happy, until a minute ago, to have heard nothing about little Una for the last six months," Eliza said.

"She wrote me," said Leslie, returning to the room.

"Well, I was happy to hear nothing about it," said Eliza.

"Well, I thought you would be happy," said Leslie.

"Our little Una in the granny dress, with straw in her hair!" said Winterneet.

"That," said Eliza, "is our Una."

THE Bernstines offered to give Ilka a lift home. Winterneet said he'd stay if someone would offer him a nightcap.

In the car, Ilka asked the Bernstines about this Una.

"Poor Una! She fell rather in love with Leslie and Eliza. Leslie-and-Eliza as a unit."

"I can understand that," said Ilka.

"The Shakesperes brought her back to the States with them. Her father is the theologian Paul Thayer," said Jenny.

"Uncle," said Joe, and they argued about Una's relationship to this Paul Thayer until they arrived at Ilka's gate.

"THEY'VE adopted Ilka," Joe said to Jenny, as they drove away.

"I like Ilka," said Jenny and frowned anxiously.

"THE Shakesperes have a new adoptee," Joe said to Zachariah Zee over the phone later that evening.

"Ah!" said Zack Zee. "Ilka."

"JOE says Leslie and Eliza have adopted Ilka," Zack said to his wife, Mary, at Sunday breakfast, and Mary said, "I wish her lots of luck."

THAT morning, Leslie called and came and got Ilka. Ilka walked into Eliza's kitchen and Winterneet was already sitting at the table, smiling his delightful smile at Ilka.

Ilka was not some young thing: it annoyed her not to be able to keep her end up like Eliza, who could keep the conversation flying like some high-wire act while she cut, sliced, corrected the seasoning, and performed last-minute maneuvers at the stove. Eliza, tossing and tasting the salad, elaborated a very tall tale that Winterneet topped with a deliciously nasty quip. Ilka wanted to play with them up there in the middle air, but the palpitation of her heart preëmpted her breathing. She hunkered down, waiting for the laughter to take its course so she could take a running start and get her own joke airborne with enough breath for the punch line; but Eliza, passing round the beautiful French bread, had started a story that grew naturally out of Winterneet's point, which Ilka had missed because it took off from what she suspected herself of not having recognized as a quotation. Ilka crouched—awaiting the next opening in the hope that she would have thought of something to fit whatever might by that time be under discussion—but she grew discouraged, and stopped listening.

She looked at Leslie. He attended to his bread, buttered it. Now he sat back in his chair and observed his wife and his friend with the air of a man eating the world's best bread and butter, and listening to the best conversation, in his own house, at his own breakfast.

Eliza had glided two coddled eggs onto Leslie's plate when the doorbell rang. Leslie looked regretful, reluctantly got up, and went to answer. He came back. He said, "Dear. Una."

"No!" said Eliza.

"She's come straight from the airport," said Leslie. "She has all her bags."

Eliza said, "I recommend the Concordance Hotel, corner of Euclid and Main, clean and well lighted."

Leslie went out.

"You can't do that, can you? Can you do that?" asked Ilka in an excited whisper. "Can you tell someone to go away?"

"Watch me," said Eliza. "Or watch me tell Leslie to tell her."

"Only . . . imagine having just arrived from New York—"

"London," said Eliza.

"What do you *say* to her?"

"You say, 'If you bother me, I'll set the Concordance police on you.' "

Leslie returned. Eliza gave him back the eggs she had kept warm for him, poured Winterneet more coffee, and said, "I always make Leslie go and do the dirty work."

"Yes, you do," said Leslie.

Ilka said, "What actual words did you say to her?"

"I said, 'There's a nice enough family hotel on Main—medium priced.' I wrote the address on a piece of paper and hugged her goodbye."

"You hugged Una!" cried Eliza.

"Yes," said Leslie.

"She's Paul Thayer's niece, no?" asked Winterneet.

"Niece by marriage," Leslie said. The doorbell rang again. Eliza took Leslie's eggs and covered them with foil.

When Leslie came back, he had his car keys in his fist. "Her driver's driven off. I'll take her to the hotel."

"Exit Leslie," said Eliza. "She's *driven* her driver off! Our Una likes to have *Leslie* drive her. Una is always having to be driven. Una *always* needs picking up."

Ilka reddened and said, "But didn't you use to like her?"

"Una was a chilly little English schoolgirl, who came to America and caught the sixties."

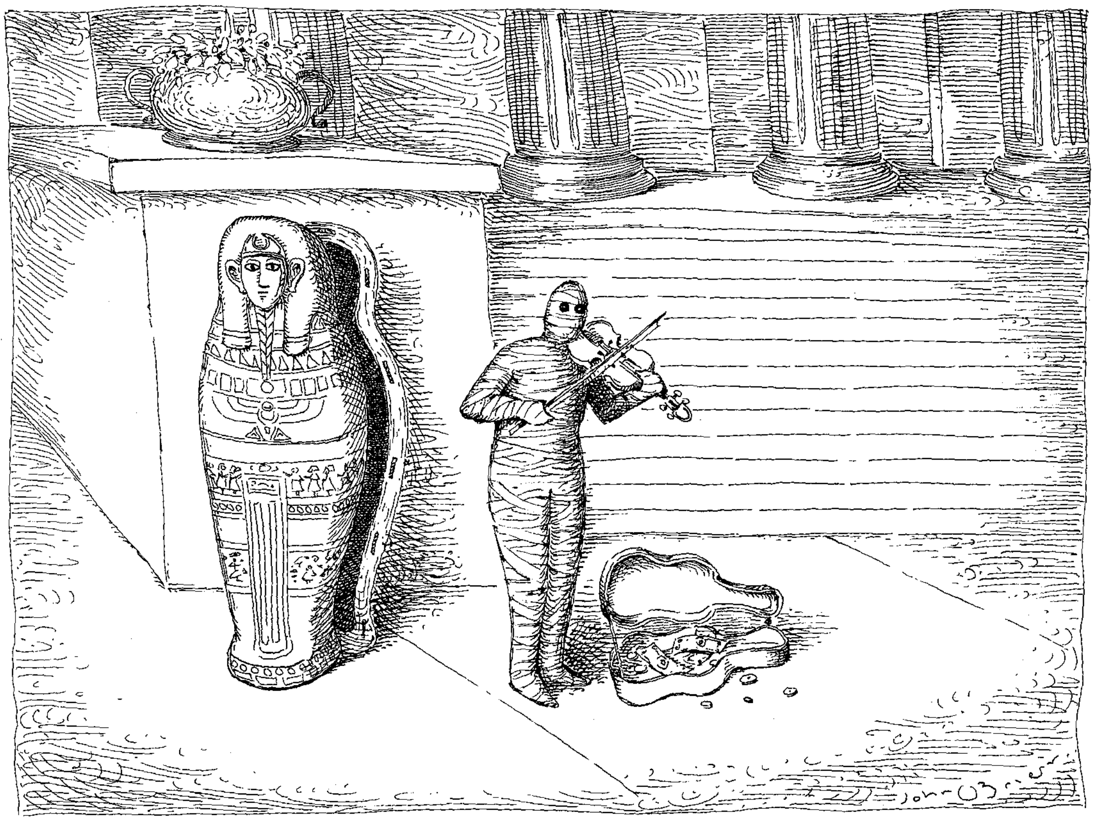
"Why isn't that a good thing for a chilly girl to catch?"

"Because she had to work so hard at it. Have you ever seen a hedonist with gritted teeth?"

"Poor Una," said Ilka.

"Poor, poor Una," said Eliza. "Remember the baby kangaroo in Pooh Corner? It keeps saying, 'Look at me jumping!'? Una kept leaping out of her pouch, saying, 'Look at me screwing everybody!' "

Ilka said, "But, Eliza, imagine having been born chilly. What was Una *supposed* to do?" Ilka looked to Winterneet for help, but he kept eating. Ilka said, "Don't you think



there's something gallant about warming yourself up by your own bootstraps? What do you want her to *do*?"

"Go back to London," said Eliza.

When Leslie returned from driving Una to the Concordance Hotel, he ate his eggs and salad and then he drove Ilka home to the Rasmussens'.

Eliza was not present at the institute's reception, which poor Una gate-crashed.

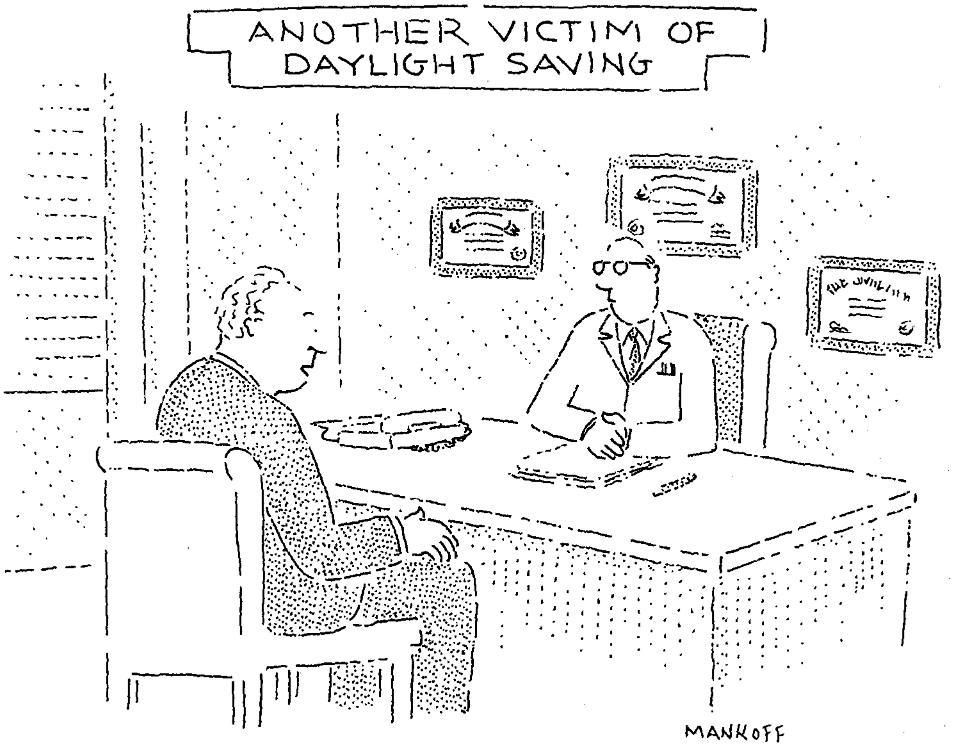
Ensconced together in the embrasure of the window, Leslie and Una looked like the classic couple one pretends not to have noticed on a couch or a park bench—she in tears, he consoling, sorry for her, and implicated, although her trouble, one knows, is all hers. Leslie offered Una his handkerchief and waited till she had finished wiping her eyes and blowing her nose. Seeing Ilka looking toward them, he beckoned. He introduced them. Ilka said, "Hi."

Una stared at the new entity before her with humorless eyes. She was a lovely, clever-looking young woman. Her no-bra, bedroom-hair style seemed grafted onto a Reynolds beauty. Una's little, elegant face was exaggeratedly shapely and pointed, her mouth tiny, moist. Instead of an amplitude of crackling satin, Una had on the inevitable anorexic pair of jeans. She sobbed. She said, "Isn't the criminal supposed to be told her crime? What did I do that was so wrong? Why has she dropped me? I rang her, and she picked up and said that she was out."

Ilka and Leslie did not smile. Una had begun to cry again. Leslie offered to drive her back to the hotel. "You want a ride?" he asked Ilka, who understood that she would be a welcome buffer.

Ilka, in the back seat, was no help in stemming Una's grief at her expulsion from the paradise of Eliza's kitchen. "All I want is to sit down face-to-face and talk this thing out!"

"Talking out face-to-face! It's an overrated activity," said Leslie sadly. At the hotel he walked the weeping young woman to the door, hugged her goodbye, and patted his pocket, but Una had kept his handkerchief.


ANOTHER VICTIM OF DAYLIGHT SAVING
MANKOFF

"I don't know, Doc, a man can 'spring forward' and 'fall back' just so many times."

Leslie got back into the car and said, "Come to the house?"

"Love to."

Winterneet was sitting at the kitchen table. Eliza was on a tear. "Can't pick up the telephone without finding Una howling at the other end. Leslie, you remember the day Una wove a circle round you thrice?"

"Round us both, you and me," said Leslie.

"Aren't Jewish brides supposed to walk circles around the groom?" Eliza asked Ilka.

"Are they? Viennese like me tend to be inefficient Jews."

"She's a spider spinning you into her web," said Eliza.

"A magic circle," said Leslie.

"A mandala," said Winterneet. "She was incorporating you. I think our Una was into a little bit of witchcraft."

"*Into* witchcraft? As you are *into* destroying the language," said Eliza, but Winterneet said that he was rather fond of this "being into" things and smiled into Ilka's eyes. It was a nice example of what Mencken called "judicious neology," he said, but offered to give it up if Eliza could come up with a better English formulation that expressed that particular human relation to a human activity.

"It's a syntactic barbarism," said Eliza. They were off. Leslie leaned back and smiled at them, and Ilka was jealous. She contracted and relaxed her several muscle groups beginning with the ones she sat upon. She draped her left arm with what she meant to be an easy carelessness across the back of Leslie's chair; the arm cramped. She ungritted her teeth, relaxed her jaws, temples, cheeks, and achieved the unnatural expression of a person intending to look natural.

Ilka did not think she had impinged on Una's consciousness and was surprised, when she answered the Rasmussens' doorbell, to find the girl on her front step. "Leslie gave me your address," said Una. Una had come to talk about the Shakesperes. "It's like living a whodunit that opens with the hanging, and it's me who's being hanged. What did I do? I think it was the ice cream. Once Eliza made ice cream. It tasted lovely, and I *told* her it tasted lovely, but I shouldn't have said I liked the *consistency* of the bought kind, because she didn't talk to me the rest of the night."

"It's weird," said Ilka, "the way we can't, any of us, bear being faulted."

"But I didn't even fault her. I didn't say I didn't like her ice cream; all I said was that I liked the consistency of the bought."

"I'm wearing a blue dress," said Ilka. "Somebody says, 'Green is a nice color,' and I think, I'm never going to talk to this person ever again."

"But that's silly," said Una.

"That's what I mean," said Ilka. "All we hear is someone saying we are less than perfectly perfect."

"I never mind being told when I've done something wrong."

Ilka said, "Will you forgive me if I don't believe you?"

"What I can't stand," said Una, "is *not* being told. I don't understand people not sitting down face-to-face." Una wiped her eyes and said, "What I actually think is, I think my opinions are too difficult for Eliza to assimilate. She's a very uptight person. I threaten her because I hang very loose."

Ilka looked surreptitiously at her watch, but Una had just started in.

LESLIE sounded his horn outside Ilka's gate on Sunday at eleven. "Eliza is on a rampage," he said. A new phase had begun in what Eliza had taken to calling the Una Initiative. Leslie had gone to bed early the night before. Eliza, staying downstairs with a book, had raised her eyes and seen Una staring in the window.

The version Eliza told Ilka and Winterneet at the kitchen table was elaborate. "I walked into the kitchen to get myself a glass of wine, walked back into the living room, and settled myself on the sofa. Where's my book? Nothing like being in the middle of a book, all set to go on reading, and you don't know where you put it. I got up, I walked around, looked everywhere, and there's a maenad, a bacchante—wild eyes, nose flattened against the glass, hair full of fruits and leaves—mouthing at me! I let out such a holler that Leslie came bounding downstairs, and it's something to see Leslie bounding in his blue pajamas with the navy piping."

Leslie said, "Eliza was going to call the police and report a trespasser."

"It was our Una peering through the cherry tomatoes! Leslie pulled on his trousers and drove her back to her hotel."

"She came to my door to complain about you," said Ilka.

"Can't open a door or look through a bloody window without finding Una outside," Eliza said. The front doorbell rang, and she said, "I'm calling the police," but it was the town deli with a delivery: Una's peace offering, a heroic basket, a cornucopia. "Bourbon-spiked marmalade! That's disgusting."

"Let's try some," said Leslie.

"Canned jugged hare! Toss it out. Baroque pears! Look at the size! They're obscene."

"Superfruit, like in those—what kind of still-life paintings am I thinking of?"

"The kind where a worm crawls out of the apple, or a bug, a wasp. A spider."

Ilka said, "But, Eliza, you have to imagine being Una and not knowing what to do about you. I think she really is in pain."

"She's a pain in the neck," Eliza said.

"REALLY, though," Ilka said to Leslie when he drove her home, "what *did* Una do that made Eliza drop her?"

"Eliza *and I*," said Leslie. "We have both dropped Una."

Ilka understood and accepted the reprimand. In a moment, she said, "But imagine you have friends whom you love, whose kitchen you are used to walking in and out of, and one day they won't let you in, and won't tell you why they won't."

Leslie was silent for such a long time that Ilka said, "Why won't you tell Una *why*?"

"I'm trying to think what the answer to your question is," said Leslie. "I don't want to answer you until I have thought."

"Sorry," said Ilka.

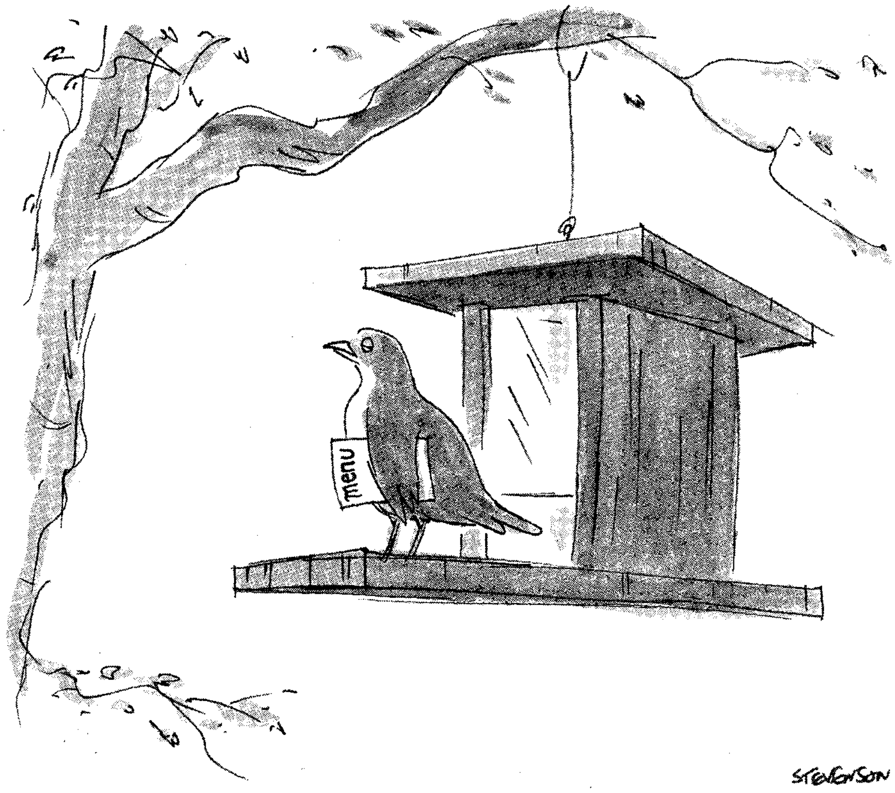
Leslie said, "I'll get you a copy of Winterneet's little book called 'Tales from the Mouth of God.' They're quite nice. In each of Winnie's stories God irritably corrects a Bible story that misrepresents what he had in mind. God says why would he have expelled Adam and Eve for eating fruit? He says they *bored* him, but he didn't want to tell them so. It's devastating to know you are a bore, because it's not something you can do anything about. Much kinder to let them think it was something they had *done*, so that they could hope, if they stopped doing it, to get back into paradise. So God said, 'Let there be sin.' "

"Do you think Una is a bore?"

"Don't you think so?"

Ilka said, "But wasn't she the same bore when you liked her and brought her to the States with you?"

"In another of Winnie's stories," Leslie said, "God says, 'Let there be



"Can you believe this is happening to me? Her scores are very low in self-esteem."

falling in love.' It makes the other person's sin smell like our own sin—that's to say, not at all. Ah, but the stink after we fall out of love, or out of friendship!"

"That's terrible!" said Ilka.

"Yes. It is," said Leslie.

BACK in the kitchen Eliza was filling Winterneet's glass. She filled her own glass and said, "The phone rings. Una is strapped for cash, and the bank is about to close. Leslie drives right over to take her to the bank. The phone rings. Una is suicidal and about to jump out of the window. Leslie runs right over to catch her. *Oh, but you have to imagine being poor Una being strapped!*" She spoke in a mincing voice, with an extravagantly innocent gape of the eyes, and a full Viennese roll of the "R." "*You have to imagine being suicidal!* I don't have to bloody *imagine* being suicidal! And I don't have to imagine Una when I've got her bloody underfoot."

Winterneet tilted the empty salad bowl and picked pieces of arugula off the sides.

ELIZA was still going strong the following evening, at a dinner party at Yvette Gordot's. A letter had been slipped under Eliza's kitchen door. "I swear I will call the police if she persists in creeping round the house at night," Eliza said. She read the letter in its entirety, with a good deal of drama: " '*Expulsion and excommunication are cruel and unusual punishments for the commission of a crime of which one has never been accused. I feel that I am living a Kafkaesque whodunit that opens with my hanging as the criminal who has to double as the detective trying to discover my own crime.*' Here," said Eliza, "we come to our central mystery. Una writes, '*Was it the ice cream?*' Una appears to suspect herself of having committed an ice cream! She says, '*Give me five minutes*'—three exclamation marks—'*and I will tell you what I meant about consistency.*' One more exclamation mark and a tearstain. '*Why will you not give me the opportunity to explain or maybe plain apologize?*' Tearstains. '*Of all the people I have ever met in all of my life*' "—here Eliza's voice suggested accompanying violins—" '*I have never been so happy as in your and Leslie's company.*' " Eliza placed her right hand as if to hold up her left breast in the manner of certain neoclassical fountain statuary, and raised her eyes to the heavens above before lowering them onto page 2. " '*I have sat at your kitchen table and have thought, There is no place in all the world where I would rather be than right here, right now.*' "

Ilka was listening, and watching Winterneet walk toward her. Winterneet leaned against the wall beside her. Ilka said, "But that's just how *I* feel about the Shakesperes' kitchen table."

"Me, too, until Eliza goes on a tear."

Ilka experienced the little thrill of a little treachery. She said, "I *am* getting a bit weary of Eliza and the Una Initiative."

"I," said Winterneet, "am getting out of town."

"How long do Eliza's rampages last?"

"Until she finds the next old favorite to demolish. I'm going to London for the weekend," said Winterneet.

"No, you're not, and I can prove it." Winterneet turned his face to look at Ilka, who went on, "People I stand next to leaning against a wall at a party don't go for weekends to London."

Winterneet said, "Come with me."

Ilka said, "That'll be the day!" and laughed and caught the sound—or caught the small, violent commotion to the right of her right ear—of Winterneet's face responding, as if to one of those empty movie slaps. Ilka, unaware of having administered it, turned in surprise to see only Winterneet's left ear and his slack jaw turned in a direction radically away from her.

"First a week in Copenhagen, now a weekend in London!" said Ilka, who thought she was flattering the famous old man. "Sounds just too damn glamorous."

"Does it?" Winterneet turned his face to look not at Ilka but straight before him. He said, "It's a gas from the time I get out of bed in the morning until sometime around five in the afternoon. Then I want to die."

"But don't they give you lots of receptions?"

"Every night they give me a reception," said Winterneet.

"Don't you get to meet every-

DAY'S WORK

Tiny through binoculars, three deer cross
the hill's sunlit flank and vanish
into a cast-out haven of shade. Nearer, something rustles
in the hedge, a voice of water elbowing
through moss and fern. The child in the stone garden
is tending forget-me-nots and fresh words:
"Awfully," she'll say, and "Concentrate." The sun
will stand on her fair hair for maybe a minute
at a time. She'll be handing her mother wet clothes
to hang on the line, shaking a red dress out,
talking and talking, turning
her world around. High on the gray slate roof
a man is fixing wire mesh
over chimney pots of yellow clay. Another—
pullover belted in his pants, the Wellingtons
rolled down, trousers tucked in—is leaning
a fork into the sod, lifting up a small mass
of darkness: single clink of tine on stone
hits air, my ear. Beyond, the crazed bellowing
of cattle, flesh-pink heavy udders
dangling like church bells. Olive green, a jeep
circles the estate: a mobile hive
of soldiers, guns jutting. On lake water's still surface
an urgency of inky scribbling—one dizzy square yard
frantic with rape and waiting: copulation
is a quick spin, a second's spasm, that space
glinting with unfathomable
electric appetites. The word "soul"
seems more and more remote, although
the day trembles on your neck bone
with the weight of something
that just won't add up—the way the scent
of laurel flowers flooding the avenue at dusk
rushes a speechless episode from childhood on you
that may not be explained. And people go on
hanging out washing, laying garden paths down,
as if these most natural things in the world
had a world to come home to: they've draped
their banners all across the grass; in one
thick even line they've sliced the sod; sun falls,
then shadow, on the stack of paving slabs set out
near the child's blue trike. Out back
the black-and-white cattle lumber
in slow motion to shade, the map of Australia
rippling on one rump. Part of the work
is to get in, isn't it, as much as possible? Although
Don't speak, she'd say, *until you're spoken to.* So
I waited to hear something "rugged and luminous,"
and waited, ticking off varieties of silence. Inland,
the fog chews things over with its own
slow appetite: one by one by one they disappear—
wire fences pearled by rain, the milky grass,
the rhododendron's naked blaze. First to go
was the ghostly half-moon, a quick mouthful.
The whole business a mirage just mounted there,
waiting to be rolled away. Remember
how the rapid rolling throat of sea fog
swallowed islands, cutting our own house
out of the picture and leaving us
only the lowing moan the foghorn makes
a mile out from the harbor mouth? How we huddled
in small low-ceilinged rooms
where cold faces are pushed
up to the window—speaking in whispers, comforting
the child, almost afraid to look at one another?

—Eamon Grennan

• •

body? You can have any damn body you want!"

"Evidently not," said Winterneet glumly.

Sunday, Leslie beeped his horn outside Ilka's gate. He said Eliza was fit to be tied. "Winterneet has taken Una to London with him."

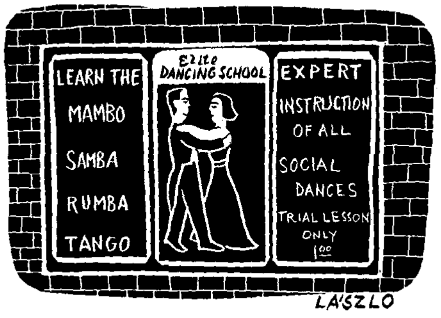
"He took Una? You mean he meant it!"

Leslie turned in to his drive and pulled sharply up. "Oh, for goodness' sake!" In the middle of the driveway stood four cardboard boxes. Ilka and Leslie got out of the car and Leslie said, "I'll get this if you'll go and talk to Eliza," and he picked the first box up and carried it into the house and up the stairs and into his study.

Eliza said, "I'm fit to be tied."

"I think," Ilka said, "that travelling solo is Winterneet's memento mori. The fact is that no one can bear being alone, except most people keep right on bearing it, and Winterneet can't, and he doesn't need to."

"Must be why every time he leaves another wife he moves in with us—breakfast, lunch, and dinner," said Eliza. "And deposits another box of papers." She smiled blackly at Leslie, who had walked in rather out of breath. "We moved two boxes of his to Amherst with us, stored three with our things when we went back to Oxford, and brought four to Concordance. For fifteen years Winnie has been going to take his boxes home as soon as he sorts out what he is going to throw away."



"Which he will never do," said Ilka, "because the papers we are always going to throw away are the papers we are never going to read again, and we won't know which they are till we've read them again."

"That's so," said Leslie and looked at Ilka with pleasure, the same pleasure he looked at his wife with when she said something he recognized.

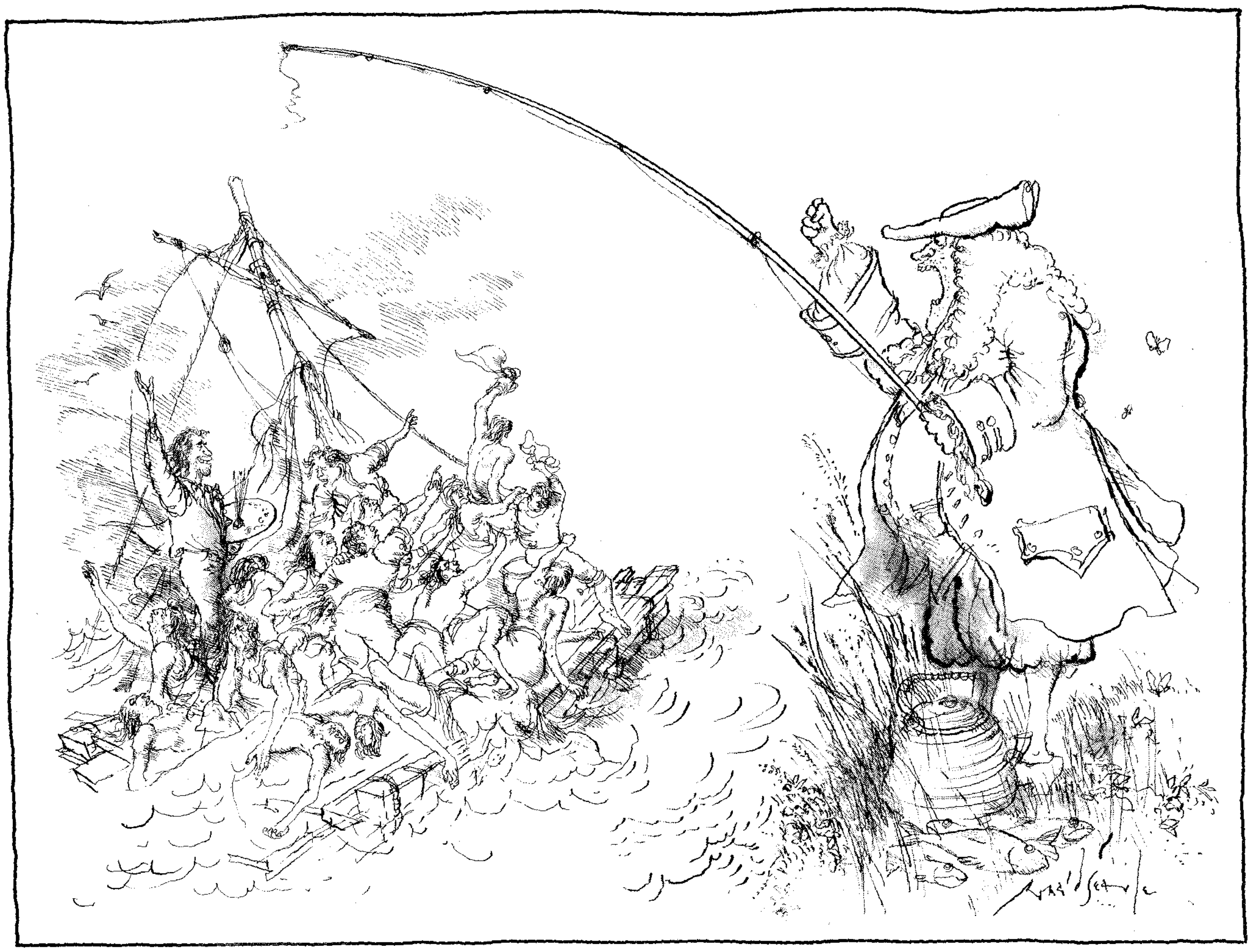
Eliza said, "And Winnie would come across the Nobel Prize acceptance speech he wrote when he was twenty-nine."

Leslie uncrossed his right leg from over his left knee and crossed his left over his right leg.

Leslie said, "Dear."

Eliza said, "You know what Winnie did the week I lost the baby?" Leslie got up and went and stood beside her. She said, "Winnie got out of town."

"He had an interview at Stanford," said Leslie.



CROSSED PATHS

Géricault Meets Izaak Walton

• •

"The Bernstines, to all intents and purposes, moved in," Eliza said. "The Bernstines sat with us, and howled with us, and talked with us, and were silent with us, and Winnie got out of town."

"I think," Ilka said, "that we feel shy around friends something has happened to."

"That's true," said Leslie.

Ilka said, "We don't know what it is O.K. to say."

"That's true," said Eliza. "I haven't called my friend Sarah, who wrote to tell me her son has leukemia."

"I wrote her," said Leslie.

"The hell you did," said Eliza, swivelling her chair to give Leslie a pretend kick in the shins. Maybe it was not pretend.

Ilka said, "You can't not mention what has happened, and you can't mention it, for fear of reopening the wound."

"And Winnie," said Eliza, "couldn't bear to watch the blood flow, so he got out of town and let it flow behind his back."

Leslie very quietly said, "That'll be enough."

Ilka had supper with the Shakesperes Wednesday, and afterward the Bernstines dropped over. Jenny looked worriedly at Eliza and said, "Winnie's back. He's installed Una in his house."

Joe, looking sheepish, said, "We've offered Una an internship."

Several subjects were started, and dropped down the abyss of Eliza's silence, so it seemed to come out of left field when she presently said, "Will no one take my part? Nobody is on my side. Leslie chauffeurs Una around town. Joe gives Una a job. Ilka imagines Una's point of view. Ilka imagines Winnie's point of view. Ilka imagines every point of view except mine."

Ilka said, "I think I'm doing sympathetic magic. I think what I think is that if I argue Una's and Winnie's points of view, someone, when Leslie and Eliza have had enough and dropped me, will argue my point of view." Ilka, who had thought that she was kidding, discovered that her throat was blocked.

"Leslie and I are your elective cousins," said Eliza. "What do you plan to do that you will deserve to be dropped for?"

"Ah," said Ilka, "that is what I want you to promise you will tell me."

Eliza said, "Make you a deal—if you'll quit imagining everything and everybody and making me look like the wicked witch of Concordance, I promise to bad-mouth you to your face."

"And you, Leslie? Do you promise?"

But the best Leslie's conscience would suffer him to do was to offer to open another bottle of this quite nice white wine.

—Lore Segal

PROFILES

RÉGISSEUR

MANHATTANITES didn't stay home much at night fifty years ago. The streets were safe, and things were cheap. If they didn't take in a play or a movie (sometimes with its own stage show), they went night clubbing. An astonishing number of night clubs came into being in the city between the end of Prohibition, in 1933, and the fatal entrenchment of television, in the fifties. These clubs offered singers, comedians, diseuses, jazz, cocktail pianists, harpists, classical guitarists, revues, mimes, dancers, ventriloquists, puppeteers, monologuists, and harmonica players. They included the great ballrooms and dance halls (the Savoy, Roseland), glitzy pre-Las Vegas palaces (the Latin Quarter, the Copacabana), ethnic music halls (Sammy's Bowery Follies, the Lorelei), posh hotel rooms (the Persian Room, in the Plaza; the Cotillion Room, in the Pierre), jazz clubs (Minton's, Jimmy Ryan's, Kelly's Stable, the Downbeat, the Famous Door, Hickory House, Nick's, Eddie Condon's), and supper clubs (the Ruban Bleu; the Blue Angel; the Café Societys, Downtown and Uptown; In Boboli; the Little Club; Bon Soir; Spivy's Roof; One Fifth Avenue; the Downstairs; the Village Vanguard). The supper clubs were the dandies of New York night life; intimate, rarefied, even precious, they were frequented by the gentry, the nouveau riche, show-biz people, and the remnants of European royalty still afloat in the city then (White Russian, Italian, Greek, Spanish).

Julius Monk

M. Blechman, Museum of the City of New York

Four men ruled the supper clubs: Herbert Jacoby, a Frenchman, who started the Ruban Bleu in 1937, modelling it on Le Bœuf sur le Toit, in Paris, and filling it at first with foreign performers, like Lotte Lenya, Marianne Oswald, Greta Keller, and Mabel Mercer (Jacoby was ahead of his time; three years later, Le Pavillon moved from the World's Fair to Manhattan, forever changing American attitudes toward food); Max Gordon, a writer manqué from Lithuania, who opened the Vanguard in 1934 and, with Jacoby, the Blue Angel in 1943; Barney Josephson, a Trenton shoe salesman of Latvian extraction, who founded Café Society Downtown in 1938 and Café Society Uptown in 1940 (the first completely desegregated night clubs in the country); and Julius Monk (no relation to Thelonious), a pedigreed North Carolinian, who took over the Ruban Bleu from Jacoby in 1942, ran it for fourteen years, started the Downstairs, and the Upstairs at the Downstairs, and finally closed his career in the late sixties at Plaza 9-, a mini-theatre fashioned out of what had been the Rendezvous Room, in the basement of the Plaza Hotel.

Relying mainly on intuition and divination, these men trained and graduated a couple of generations of singers, comedians, and actors, who went on to enliven Broadway and Hollywood and to put television and Las Vegas on their feet. Some of the members of this celebrated army: Bil and Cora Baird, Carol Burnett, Sylvia Syms, Imogene Coca, Barbra Streisand, Harry Belafonte, Aretha Franklin, Lena Horne, Jim Backus, Jack Gilford, Betty Comden and Adolph Green, Abe Burrows, Professor Irwin Corey, Zero Mostel, Judy Holliday, Orson Bean, Anita Ellis, Bobby Short, Jonathan Winters, Cy Coleman, Barbara Cook, Mort Sahl, Mike Nichols, Elaine May, Tammy Grimes, Patti Page, Wally Cox, Dorothy Loudon, Dorothy Lamour, Liberace, Tom Poston, Pearl Bailey, Andy Williams, Phyllis Diller, Eartha Kitt, Lenny Bruce, Woody Allen, and Lily Tomlin. Of course, as Max Gordon once pointed out, "there were a great many people—this is one of the sad things about show business—who performed and did nothing and disappeared."

The supper-club performers had to please their audiences and the men who hired them. But they also had to win kudos from the mysteriously powerful newspaper gossip columnists, among them Dorothy Kilgallen, Walter Winchell, Leonard Lyons, and Cholly Knickerbocker—a kind of dangerous Greek chorus, who echoed every whisper and flutter in the clubs, telling their readers who had been seen where the night before, who was (by insinuation) sleeping with whom, who was rising, who was slipping. It was a couple of the classier columnists who, in the early forties, took to calling Julius Monk—probably at his sly behest—a conférencier (lecturer) or régisseur (stage manager).

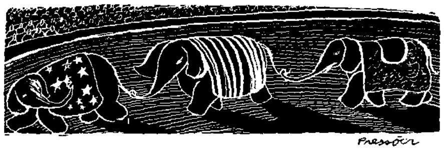
Herbert Jacoby died in the seventies and Barney Josephson and Max Gordon in the eighties. But Monk goes serenely on. Now seventy-nine, he resides in genteel, cluttered Edwardian splendor in a small aerie on West Fifty-seventh Street. He lives surrounded by mementos (a heavy brass paperweight in the shape of a heart is inscribed "To Julius a Beautiful Man a Gentle Master My Love Tammy"), photographs, watercolors (a fine one, by the composer Harvey Schmidt, of the ramshackle building that the Downstairs first occupied, on West Fifty-first Street), oils (of him, his mother, his father, and Provincetown, and an abstract landscape by Stark Young), huge hand-tooled Mark Cross scrapbooks, and an Empire sleigh bed covered with needlepoint pillows, many of them sewn by his friend the singer-pianist Hubbell Pierce, and embroidered with the name of one of the revues Monk produced at the Downstairs or at Plaza 9-.

Monk is watched over closely by his longtime friend Virgil Whitney, a management consultant, who lives in Turtle Bay. "People have said that Julius is desperate for money," he said not long ago. "That is not true. He is quite comfortable, though he would be rich if he had signed a ten-per-cent contract with all the people he brought along. But he never operated that way. If he has been distressed about being retired, he has never let it show. He is quite stoic. It was the end of an era when he retired, and he was smart enough to recognize it. He reads. He loves to eat. He keeps in phone contact with old friends like Imogene Coca and Dorothy Loudon. He travelled extensively for a time—Mexico, London, Paris. But his arthritis makes it difficult for him to get around now, and his vision is limited. And he had some heart trouble a while ago and was told he had to lose thirty pounds, which he did. He was very upset last fall by that dreadful, vulgar book about night clubs called 'Intimate' something or other. He has a large part in it, and it is full of inaccuracies and innuendo—the kind of thing that one simply does not have a way of dealing with. If he took a more cynical view of life, he would be less put upon. But he can be gullible and naïve, and that is surprising when one considers how much time he spent in the venal, narcissistic world of show business."

WHEN he receives visitors, Julius Monk sits on a love seat in his living room, a cane held between his knees. He sits very straight and looks straight ahead. He is slightly over six feet tall ("six and a half feet," as he puts it), and his hair is white and thinning. The extraordinary dark-haired handsomeness of the Monk of thirty or forty years ago—poetic, almost smoldering good looks, like those of the young Alec Wilder or the young Orson Welles—rests just inside his high-domed, gently aging face. (Monk began modelling in the forties, and became one of the highest-paid male models in the land.) He doesn't smile very often, and, when he does, it is the memory of a smile. He still talks in stately, ceremonial rhythms. He likes to put little breaks in his words; "hiring," for instance, comes out "high-ring." His accent is unique. It has two sources—an upper-class North Carolina drawl and a kind of Oxonian, possibly picked up in the thirties, when he hobnobbed with the Duke and Duchess of Kent. (The New York gossip columnists had trouble with the royals; sometimes they had Monk hanging out with the Kents, sometimes with the Yorks.) Every second paragraph, these disparate languages lock, and an entire sentence goes by, its face turned to the wall.

His life has been divided into five parts: his rapscallion youth, which ended in 1934, when he left the Cincinnati Conservatory and moved to New York; his seesawing years, from 1935 to 1940, spent racketing endlessly back and forth between Europe and New York, an itinerant pianist and boulevardier; his tenure as the régisseur of the Ruban Bleu; the dozen years he spent as the producer of brittle, brilliant revues at the Downstairs and Plaza 9-; and his long, graceful retirement. His talk tends to move on many legs and in many directions. Here, collated (and translated when need be), are some of his recollections.

"When I came to New York after Prohibition, I got a job playing piano at the One Fifth Avenue bar. Joe Lilley, who was at the Greenwich Inn, joined me, and we became the duo of Joe and Jules. A celestial-looking girl named Dorothy Lamour sang with us for six months. She had the most sensual sound. She simply *breathed* a song like 'I'm in the Mood for Love.' She and Joe went to Hollywood, and a year or two later she starred in 'The Hurricane.' This was the time of the debs. Cobina Wright had her own radio program, and there were singing contests for the débutantes at Armando's and bobbing for balloons at the Stork Club, some of them with hundred-dollar bills concealed inside. Then I met Eliza Allen. She was a sculptress who had studied with Jo Davidson, and she had come over from France to sue her ex-husband. Her father had been a major general under Black Jack Pershing, and her great chum in Paris was Katherine Anne Porter. We made pilgrimages to places like the Statue of Liberty, and we decided to get married. It was a *mariage de raison*. When I took her home to meet Mother and Father, he never once called her Mrs. Monk. She might just as well have been an instrument of the Devil. We lived together two years, then went our own ways. We were divorced in 1942.



"I had always been determined to get to Paris by the time I was twenty-one, but I missed it by two years. Eliza and I crossed on the S.S. Lafayette, and I played 'Truckin'' in a tossing sea. I believe it was new then. In Paris, I played double piano with Garland Wilson at the Dingo Bar, just around the corner from the Dôme. Herbert Jacoby, who was running Le Bœuf sur le Toit, and Jimmie Daniels, who later had the Bon Soir in New York, were around, and so were Mabel Mercer and Bricktop and, a little after, Jean Sablon and Charles Trenêt and Hildegarde. In time, I became the artistic director of the Paris Ruban Bleu. Jacoby had started it. But I was drinking heavily, and ninety per cent of the time there was no rhyme or reason to anything I did. I remember finding myself one night at Bricktop's, unannounced from New York, and being put to work immediately. I made a screen test, and played at Brummell's in London, after the Duke of Kent got me working papers. I became part of the group that wintered in Paris, travelled to the Riviera in the heat, and ended the summer in Salzburg and Budapest. In Budapest, everything was inundated with paprika, and there were vast orchestras with thirty or forty violins, and they sang 'Gloomy Sunday,' the suicide song."

In 1950, Dorothy Kilgallen turned over her column in the *Journal-American* to Monk for a day, and he wrote, "In the summer of 1937, we went down to St. Tropez, a fishing village in the south of France, got two pianos from Marseilles for which we were almost banished as witches by the natives who had never seen any before, rented

ENTERING
GOD'S COUNTRY
NEXT SECULAR AREA
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a 17th century house and opened Chez Julius, an open air terrace, where we made a killing by serving corn-on-the-cob, corned-beef hash, and hot dogs at 15 francs a throw to such clientele as Prince Philippe of Greece, the Duke and Duchess of Kent, and Marlene Dietrich. Peak of the season came with a contest for the most amusing sandals; judges were Marlene Dietrich and Noël Coward. A man won the prize."

Monk always seemed to know where he was going. "I was born in Spencer, North Carolina, on November 10, 1912," he said. "When I was seven, we moved to Salisbury. My father was Henry Laurence Monk, and my mother Nancy Catherine Blackwell Monk. I had an older brother, Laurence, or Henry, Jr., who was a dentist, and an older sister, Catherine, who married Bill Peacock, a correspondent for the A.P. She lives in a senior community in Alexandria, Virginia, and she's eighty-six and even flakier than I am. The other day, I called to ask her if she could remember when our parents died, and she said she'd look it up. She called back five or six hours later and said, 'What was it you called me for, Julius?' My father was a surgeon for the Southern Railway, and he had five brothers, all medicos, and, of course, that is what I was supposed to be. He was a handsome, balding gentleman, six and a half feet tall. He rather alarmed me and I rather alarmed him. He had a Southern overlay of Clarence Day—an autocrat at the dinner table. He always wore bespoke clothes, and that was unusual in Salisbury. He liked a kind of hopsacking with a Biltmore weave. He was quite musical and played the violin until Laurence sat on it. Whenever he caught me playing popular songs on the piano, he'd close the lid and lock it. My interest in alien music made me an important sinner. My mother was born in Pelham, North Carolina. She had a distinctive walk and a magnificent carriage and the most beautiful legs and feet. She and my father both studied singing, and she had a pretty parlor voice, sweet tones. My father was Catholic—I think a great-great-uncle had been converted on his deathbed. My mother was not, and her two brothers took a dim view of her being courted by a Catholic. It was a trying courtship. My mother was bone-dry when I arrived, and I was turned over to a wet nurse, who raised me. For years, Mother was incapable of caring for me herself—she had a goitre problem and a troublesome climacteric. I was sent to St. Leo's Hall. My father's two sisters, who were nuns, taught there. There were about thirty-five boys and thirty-five bottles of Syrup of Figs on the mantelpiece. From there I went to Belmont Abbey, which was run by Benedictines.

"My mother thought early that I had artistic inclinations. She said I'd probably be a window dresser, but I didn't like that. I already had the fantasy life of the theatrically inclined—a fantasy life questing an audience. One would envision great successes without a specific vision. We had a seven-story skyscraper in Salisbury. A gentleman scaled the building, and the entire town turned out to watch. Right away, I sent off for a book on how to walk on the ceiling. This was done by fastening rubber suction cups to your shoes. I had seen trapeze artists in the circus, and when I swung on our swing I'd hang on by my knees and go so high I almost made a complete circle. I was electrified when people stopped to watch.

"I started running away when I was eight. The first time, I took a knapsack and put three sausages in it and got to the adjacent village, about four miles away, before someone asked me if I was Dr. Monk's boy. When I was fifteen and a half, Father sent me to the Peabody Conservatory, in Baltimore. Straightaway, I bought a raccoon coat and charged it to my mother and went to New York and checked in at the Piccadilly Hotel. It was the only hotel in New York I had ever heard of. I spent my days at the Capitol Theatre and lived on milkshakes. My father alerted the Missing Persons' Bureau in New York and wrote to the New York newspaper columnist O. O. McIntyre, and I was found in the Piccadilly lobby and sent home. I mooned around when I got there, so Father sent me back to New York, to Manhattan College. After a few weeks, I was very un*galant* and said baloney to the whole thing. I packed my steamer trunk and got into a taxi and went to the Greenwich Inn, in the Village. I thought it was an inn, but it was a night club, and it was closed tight. Someone told me that Papa Strunsky rented accommodations to starving artists, and I got a room in his building on MacDougal Street for three dollars a week. I found a job

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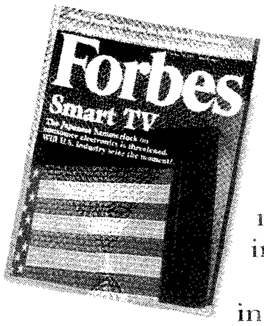
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playing piano at Abe Brown's Round Table. A policeman was stationed by the door every night to make sure no one drank, and poets like John Rose Gildea and Eli Siegel declaimed. I met a woman named Eve Peri, who made tapestries and sold them to the Met, and I moved in with her on Greenwich Avenue. That adventure ended when my mother, who had come up on the Crescent, arrived at the door."

Monk began working off and on as a pianist at the New York Ruban Bleu in 1939. "Herbert Jacoby had opened the Ruban Bleu in an empty room over Theodore's Restaurant, at 4 East Fifty-sixth Street, and soon I was there three days a week and three days at the Brevoort or the Lafayette, in the Village. Jacoby and I knew each other extremely well from Paris, and most of the time we were in accord. When we scrapped, I'd take off and play at the Café Montparnasse, which later became La Vie Parisienne. I believe it's now La Grenouille. The wonderful harpist Casper Reardon was at the Ruban. He was first harpist under Eugene Goossens, of the Cincinnati Orchestra, and he could play tenths on the harp. Cy Walter and Stan Freeman played duets, and Paula Laurence was doing comedy. Jacoby left the Ruban Bleu in 1941 and, two years later, started the Blue Angel, on Fifty-fifth Street, with Max Gordon. I took over as the régisseur at the Ruban in September of 1942, and we had Maxine Sullivan, the Delta Rhythm Boys, and the harpist Ruth Berman. The room seated just a hundred and twenty-five. There was a tiny service bar, and the tables were the size of cufflinks and were covered with a kind of contact paper. The chairs were imitation nineteenth-century café chairs, and the walls were a *bleu français*. There were banquettes along three walls. We had two grand pianos, which sat side by side right on the floor, and behind the pianos was a screen on which hung two enormous sailor hats, with decorative ribbons, that had been designed by the milliner Mr. John. The female performers dressed in our little office, and the men used a mezzanine off Theodore's. The service personnel wore black tie and tails. The music, generally provided by me, began at ten, and the show went on at ten-forty. We had no microphones and no spotlights. There was a dispirited 'Star-Spangled Banner' at eleven-forty-five, and when everyone left, at curfew, it looked like a victory parade pouring into Fifth Avenue.

"I was never catastrophically wrong about the talent I hired. I discovered intuitively that some talents take time to emerge. I don't think you can ask a performer to display talent on demand. Imogene Coca was very slow. After her first night, the owner of the Ruban asked me to let her go, but I said that if she went I went. In two weeks, she was fine. After I brought Sylvia Syms in, I taught her to pay attention to the lyrics and stop trying to sound like a horn. I told her that getting the lyrics across safely is a question of manners. Some things were exceedingly difficult to deal with—singers who had vibratos that you could skip rope with, or whose tones were too sec. But I always had a surreal comprehension of comedy, of the intricate, fallible mechanism of comedic timing. There were so many intangibles—taste, pacing, obstreperous guests, mood, getting all the members of a trio or quartet to feel good at the same time."

Sylvia Syms, still going strong, spoke about Monk the other day: "He took me into the Ruban from a club on Fifty-second Street. He taught me about the verses to songs and about good songs like 'Down in the Depths' and 'True Blue Lou.' He taught me that a song has emotional peaks and valleys and how to find them. And he taught me that as a performer you don't fall in love with yourself; you fall in love with your partner—the audience. I loved the way he introduced me, in that accent of his: 'Ladies and gentlemen. Please direct your attention and applause to our very spirited diva in the round, Miss Sylvia Syms.' And I loved to watch him bring out the wonder in other performers. He had the most incredible gift for zooming in on what needed to be edited in a performance, what needed to have a tuck taken in it, what needed to be cut. Julius had a wild sense of humor. Once, we were sitting out front in a club listening to this dippy blonde sing. After each number, Julius would nod and give a little clap, and when she finished he leaned over to me and said, 'My dear, what the fuck was that?' "

In the summer of 1946, Monk visited Provincetown, on Cape Cod. "I found Hugh Shannon banging away on the piano in this Portuguese dive, and that got things started," he said. "Hugh and I began giving shows on Sunday nights in an old saloon in a hotel called the Atlantic House. It was the kind of place where travelling salesmen stayed. We appropriated two giant uprights and painted their tops white and their bottoms blue. We found some booths in a defunct Chinese restaurant, cut them in half, and made them into banquettes. Hugh and I played duets, and Daphne Hellman, who had rented Jack Phillips' house with her husband, Geoffrey, did 'Lesson with a Harp,' which started 'First you F around.' And Imogene Coca was with us. We could seat seventy-five, and we discovered we could succeed. The following summer, we put in lights and painted the room dark blue and green and white, and called it the Kem-Tone Room. The ladies in the show wore gowns and the men tuxedos. Bibi Osterwald came, and Marilyn Cantor did a chilling takeoff of Ethel Merman. She was a daughter of the famous Cantor, so it was a brush of grandeur. The Provincetown *Advocate* got behind us, and the genteel Nautilus Society, and the drakes and swans began hacking down the A. House lane. The critics came from Boston, and we sold out every night."

The Provincetown caper lasted two or three more summers. Then, in 1953, Monk was invited by some admirers from Bermuda to put together a show for a limited run at the Bermudiana Hotel. He gathered ten or eleven of his Ruban Bleu regulars, among them Jack Fletcher, Bibi Osterwald, Bill Dana, Jean Caples, and Alice Pearce, and they rehearsed at the Village Vanguard and Spivy's Roof, and took off for Bermuda. The show, "Stock in Trade," ran for seven weeks and was a great success. It was Monk's first revue. Two years later, he left the Ruban Bleu. He described what happened next in an introduction to "Baker's Dozen," the script of his twelfth revue, published in 1964:

> After fourteen-odd years as *régisseur* of Le Ruban Bleu, I was let out to pasture and grazed serenely for six weeks at the Hungry i in San Francisco's North Beach. Upon returning to New York, I began an association with the Playgoers—a premises at Fifty-first Street and Sixth Avenue consisting of a subterranean passage and street-level bar of riotous aspect. Good fortune permitted me to indulge my variety vagary; in the Downstairs Room, *Four Below* (in association with Murray Grand and with prudent guidance from John Heawood) was painlessly delivered. On March 4th, 1956, Dody Goodman (far above par before Paar), Jack Fletcher (alumnus of Bermuda, Ruban, and Cape), Gerry Matthews (teamed with Tom Poston for Ruban debut) and June Ericson (superb soprano, also Ruban debut diva), with Murray Grand and Stan Keen's spellbinding spinets . . . extended a cordial invitation to the citizens to descend the stairs and view our wares.

Monk offered fourteen more revues during the next twelve years: "Son of Four Below," "Take Five," "Demi-Dozen," "Seven Come Eleven," "Pieces of Eight," "Dressed to the Nines," "Ten-ish, Anyone?," "Struts and Frets" (done in Chicago to test the waters outside New York; the audiences, Monk said, "cheered us to the echo," but he never went on the road again), "Dime a Dozen," "Baker's Dozen," "Pick a Number," "Four Below Strikes Back," "Bits and Pieces," and, his last revue, "Four-in-Hand," given in 1968 at Plaza 9-. The shows' casts numbered from four to eight, the music was by duo pianists, and although solo, duo, and trio voices came forward, the shows were mainly ensemble efforts. Few of the actors became stars, because stars were not encouraged. (Among the best known were Ronny Graham, Dody Goodman, Ceil Cabot, Bibi Osterwald, Alice Ghostley, Tammy Grimes, Alice Pearce, Jane Connell, Mary Louise Wilson, Gerry Matthews, Ellen Hanley, and Rex Robbins.) The same was true of the shows' writers, composers, and lyricists. (But we remember Bart Howard, William Roy, Harvey Schmidt, Tom Jones, Carolyn Leigh, Portia Nelson, Stephen Sondheim, and, again, Ronny Graham.) Gilbert and Sullivan hovered over the revues. There were patter songs, playlets, monologues, and dialogues. Monk called his revues "spoofs," and they were. Their targets included politicians, singles bars, folk songs and torch songs, Timothy Leary, cigarettes, William Zeckendorf, hippies, the suburbs, highfalutin musical societies, James Bond movies, shopping bags with department-store names on them, Mary McCarthy's "The Group," and Edward Albee's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?," done as "Who's Afraid of I. J. Fox?" (a once famous furrier). The women performers wore black cocktail dresses or black evening gowns, and the men wore tuxedos. The shows had a fast, hide-and-seek quality. Heads and arms and gloved hands popped out of a panelled front

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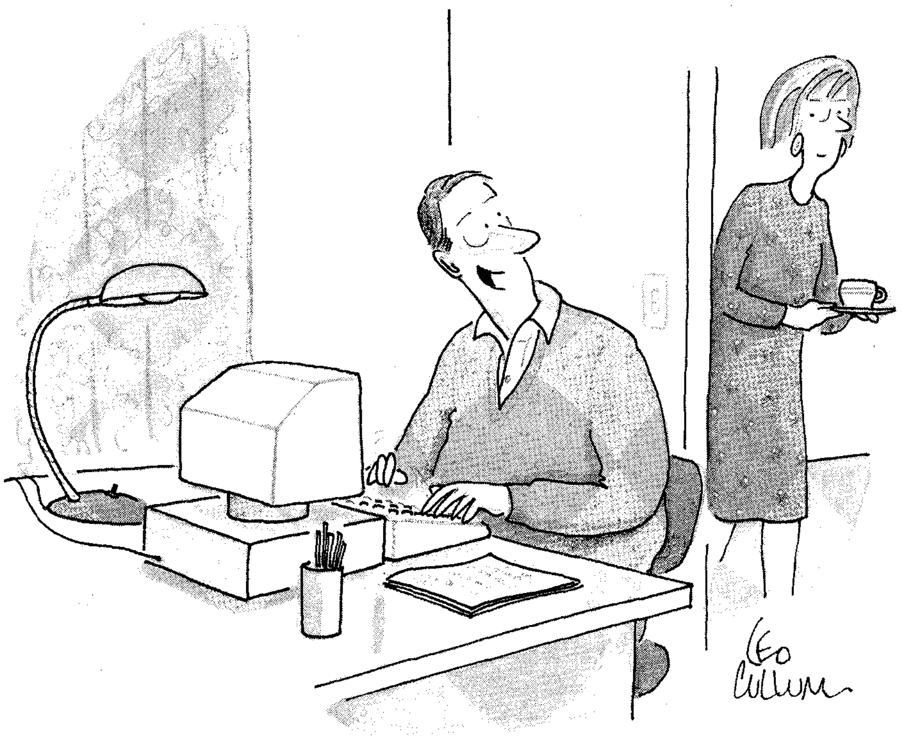


"I've found my voice, Penny. It's deep, wise, and compassionate."

cloth and disappeared, and the number of people onstage changed constantly. The only props were stools of various sizes.

Monk continued, "After I started the revues at the Downstairs, it became a collaboration with the choreographer and the writers and the composers. I hated being magisterial, and I suppose I was regarded as a benevolent despot. There were things I insisted on, like the performers' making eye contact with the audience. To do that, you had to guard against the lights' being too low. I also invented a different kind of front cloth. It was made of vertical panels, which enabled a performer to stick his head through and make announcements, or whatever, sort of like a puppet show. I paced the shows, and the pace was fast, although I wasn't a fan of constant motion. We always had the danger of a drinking audience; when anyone got too loud, I'd put the houselights up. For a while, we had a number about the John Birchers, which had the lines 'Mommie is a Commie, You've got to turn her in.' Birchers began showing up, and they'd raise a ruckus and try and stop the show. I did the last revues in 1968, because people were not coming. Television was closing in, and you couldn't make jokes anymore about ethnic things or the Kennedys or the upheaval all over the world. Doing the revues was a form of life I found exciting. I liked the feeling of the drawing room they had, of the Victorian supper room. I liked the nearness of the audience."

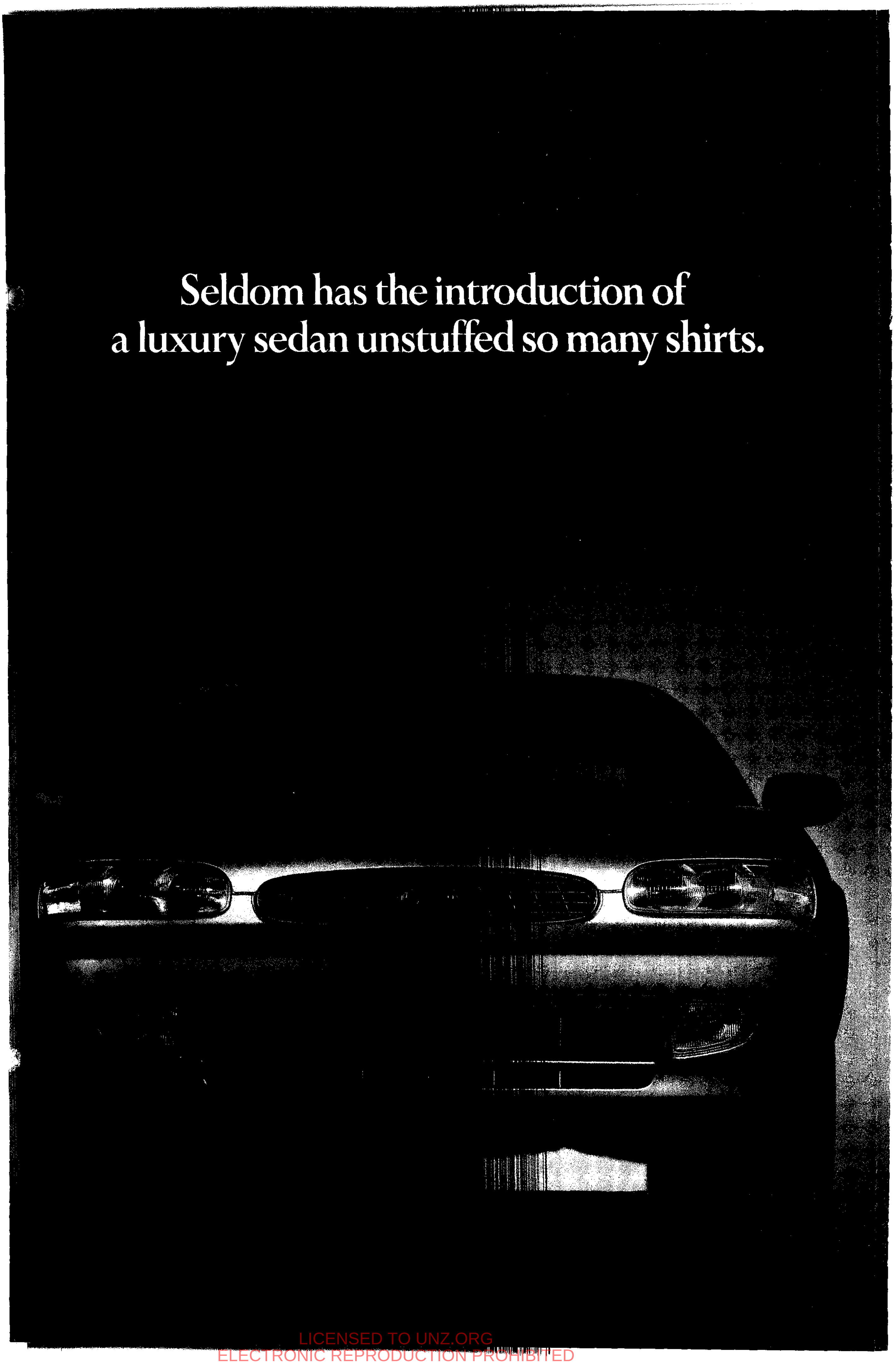
The supper clubs had begun falling by the way in the late forties. In 1948, Barney Josephson closed Café Society Uptown, forced out of business by the Hearst press, which linked him, by innuendo, to his brother Leon, an avowed Communist who had been cited for contempt by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Herbert Jacoby and Max Gordon thereupon bought the Uptown, revamped it at enormous expense, and reopened it as Le Directoire; within a year, it sank from its own luxurious weight. The Ruban Bleu closed in the fifties, and Gordon, having bought Jacoby out, sold the Blue Angel in 1964. (He had already turned the Village Vanguard into a jazz room.) Jacoby and Bobby Short started Le Caprice around the same time, but it, too, foundered. A surprising resurgence of supper clubs—or cabarets, as they began to be called—took place in the seventies. Possibly inspired by the success of Short, who had replaced the venerable cocktail pianist George Feyer in the Café Carlyle in 1968, the St. Regis reopened the Maisonette and installed Mabel Mercer in the St. Regis Room, eventually renaming it for her. The Algonquin put singers back in the Oak Room. (Greta Keller had been there in the thirties.) Michael's Pub and Soerabaja flourished on the East Side, and Reno Sweeney, the Ballroom, and Jan Wallman's thrived in the Village. Barney Josephson, long purposely incommunicado, converted his Cookery, an elegant coffee shop on Eighth Street and University Place, into a miniature Café Society Downtown.

The renaissance subsided in the late seventies, and only the Oak Room, the Café Carlyle (still Bobby Short's pedestal), and the Ballroom survive. (They have recently been joined by Rainbow and Stars, which is now experimenting with revues.) There is a scattering of comedy clubs, where untried comics work out and pray they will be spotted by a television producer. But the handwriting remains on the wall. Live entertainment—a phrase that would have puzzled the Victorians—is slowly but steadily becoming an expensive anachronism.

Virgil Whitney, who often stops by late in the afternoon, arrived, and asked Julius Monk if he could make him a chocolate Slim-Fast, and Monk said, "Please." He went on, "In 1970, I took a job as a piano recitalist in La Boîte, just off the St. Regis lobby, but it was the wrong place for me. Then Bobby Short suggested I go into his room at the Carlyle while he was away, and I did, for five weeks. I played between five and seven-thirty, and I recall people coming in from Sotheby's and riffling through their catalogues. I haven't been able to play the piano at all for two years, because of my arthritis. I miss it. If one is unhappy, it can restore one. I had some cardiac trouble a year ago, and the medicine I take tends to make me dilatory. It is often supine time for me, and I have to take a starter pill in the morning to get my heart going properly. The fact is, the erosion of the human frame will not be denied.

"I wished, of course, to pursue my modelling career after I closed Plaza 9-. But when I answered a call for an Arthur Treacher-type person I was told they wanted a *young* Arthur Treacher, as if there ever was such a thing. I discovered that one can become de trop."

—WHITNEY BALLIETT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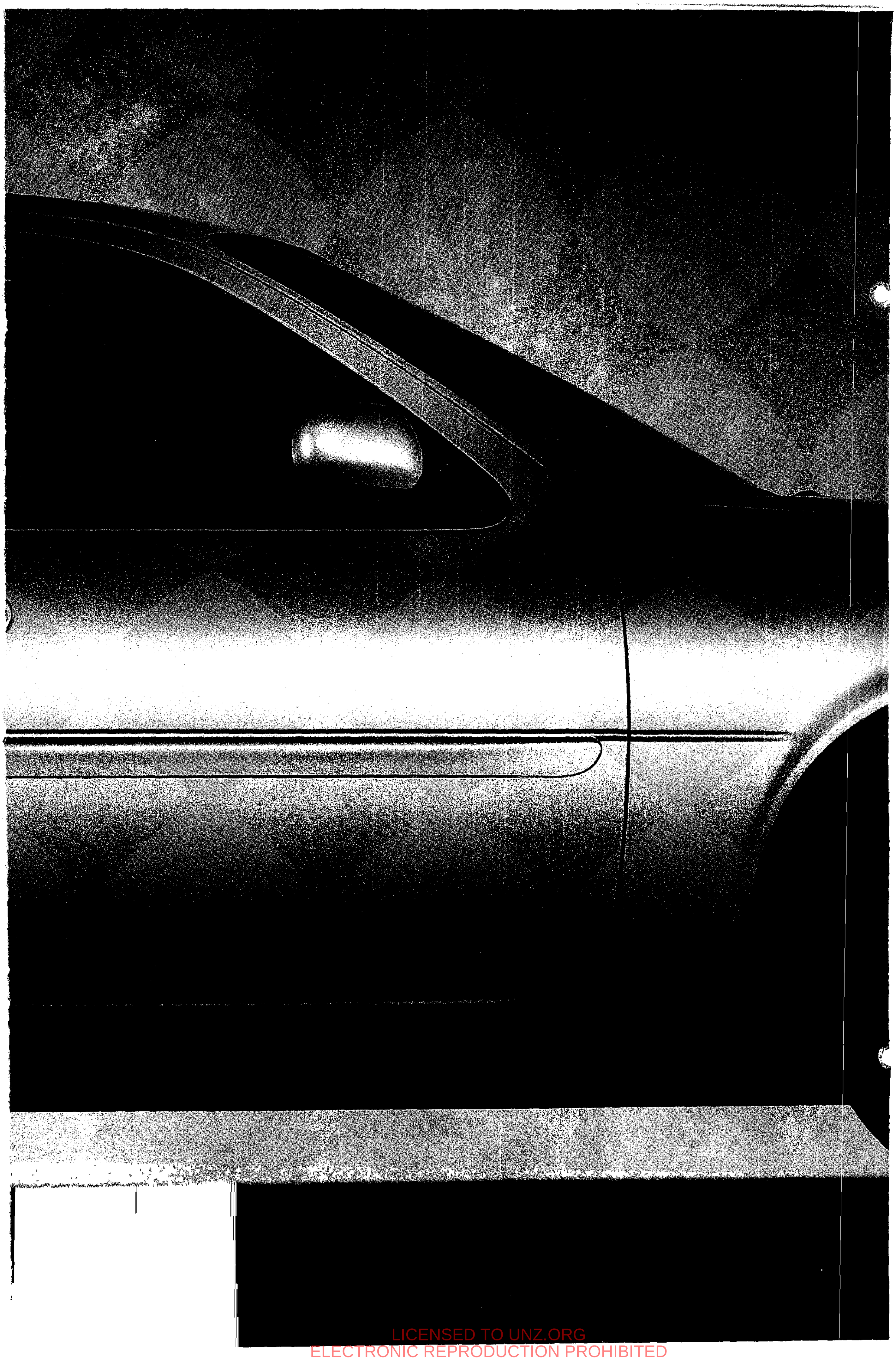

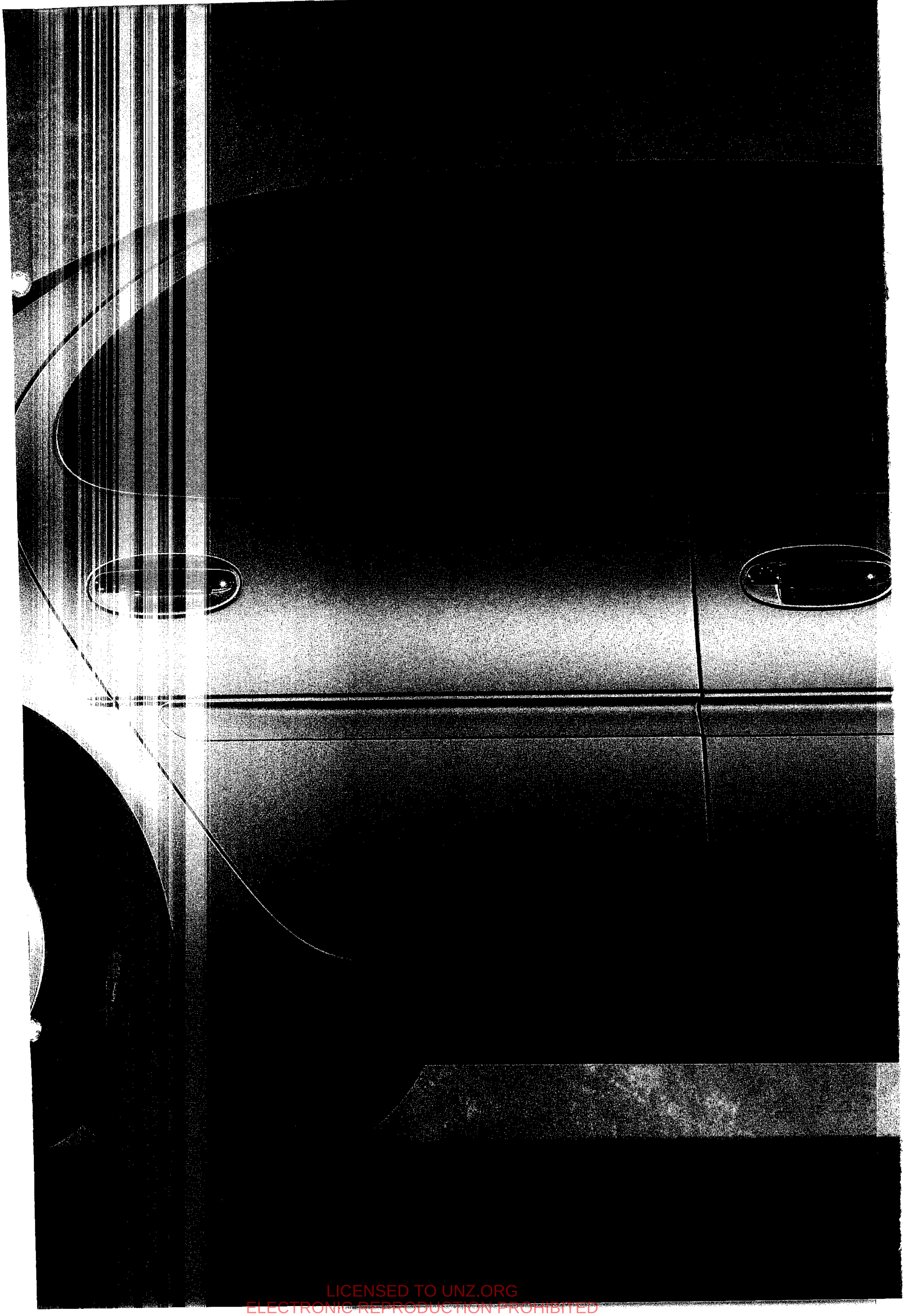

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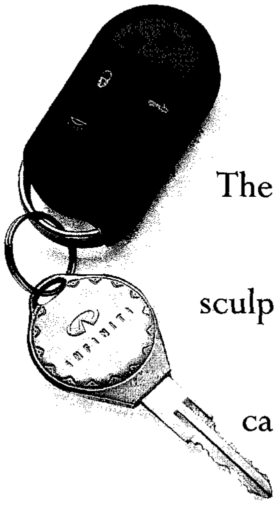
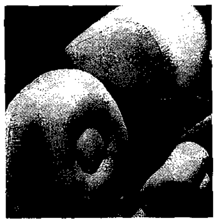
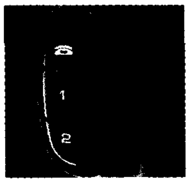
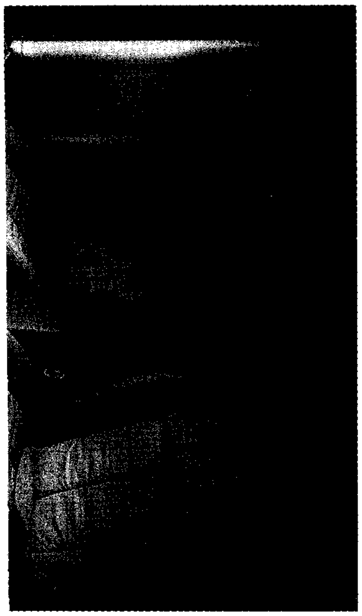
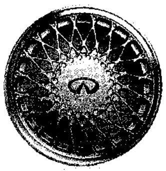


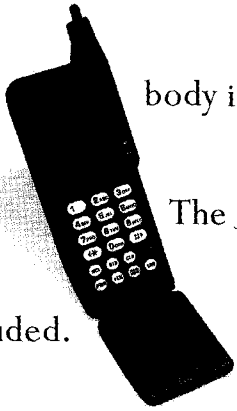
So this is what all the buzz is about. The new Infiniti J30. The fluid lines excite your eyes. And your emotions. The softly sculpted shape rounds smoothly from one plane to the next. Still, this car has opinion. Maybe it's the elliptical grille up front, that gleams with the polish of a fine silver pattern. It is somehow quite unlike anything you've ever seen. And being a very personal luxury sedan, the J30 comes with every driving comfort imaginable. The interior is elegantly stitched and tailored in fine grain leather, and detailed with the warmth of walnut. You begin to wonder if this car was conceived by artisans and craftsmen, or engineers. Settle in. Open the sunroof. Or think green and express your concern for the environment by switching on the no-freon air conditioning system. Check out the electronic wizardry. There's a keyless remote entry system. There's a Bose











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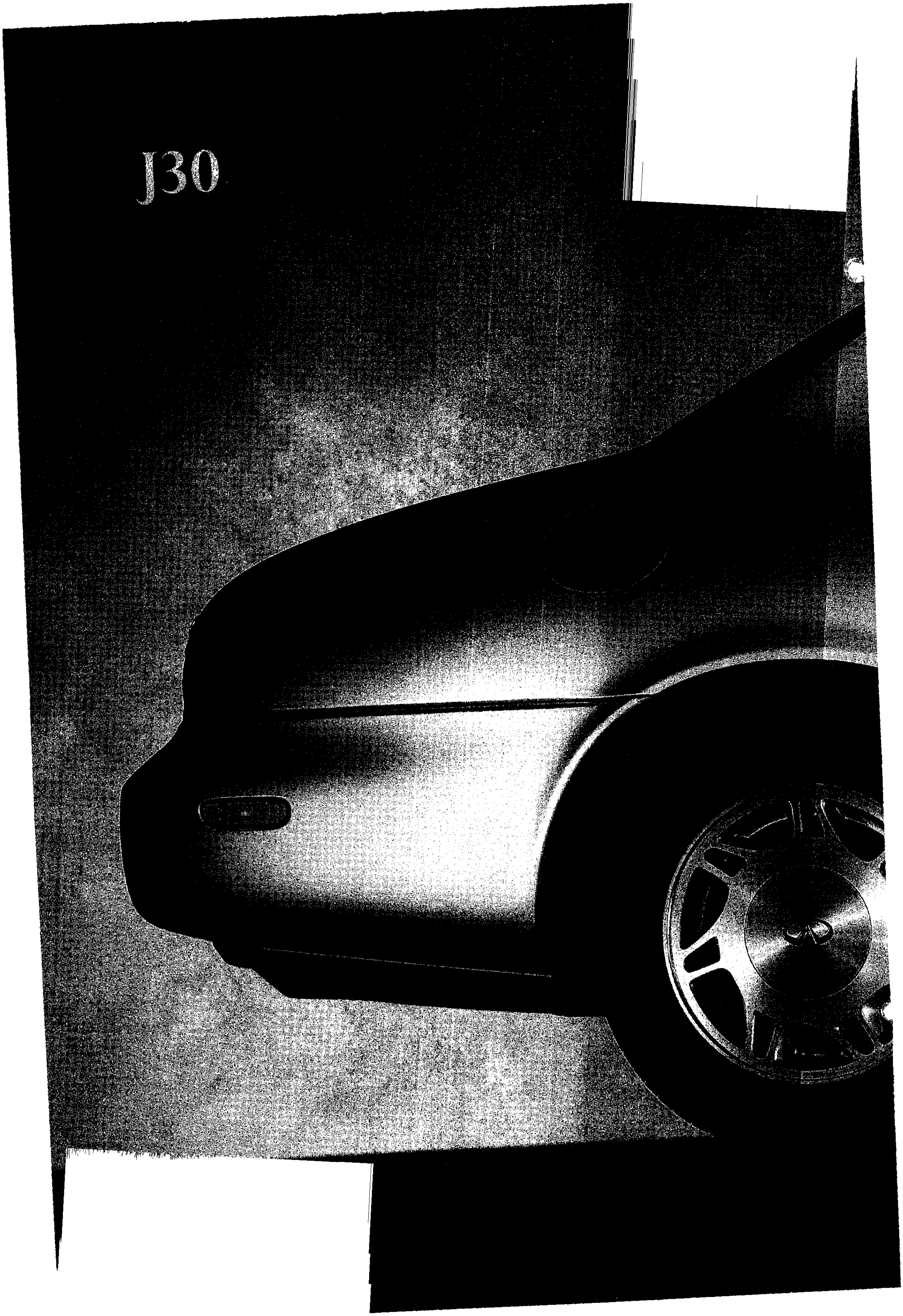
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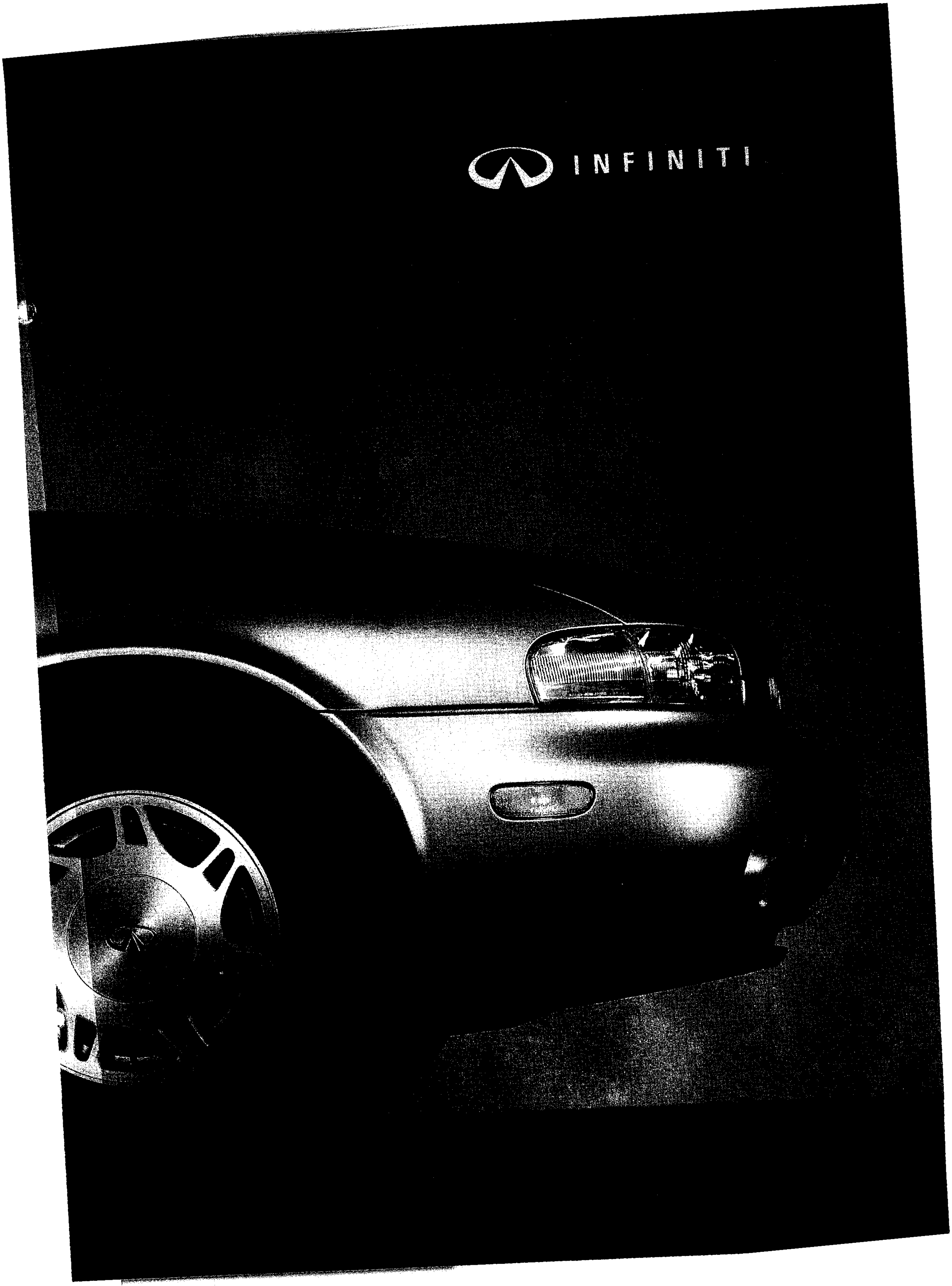
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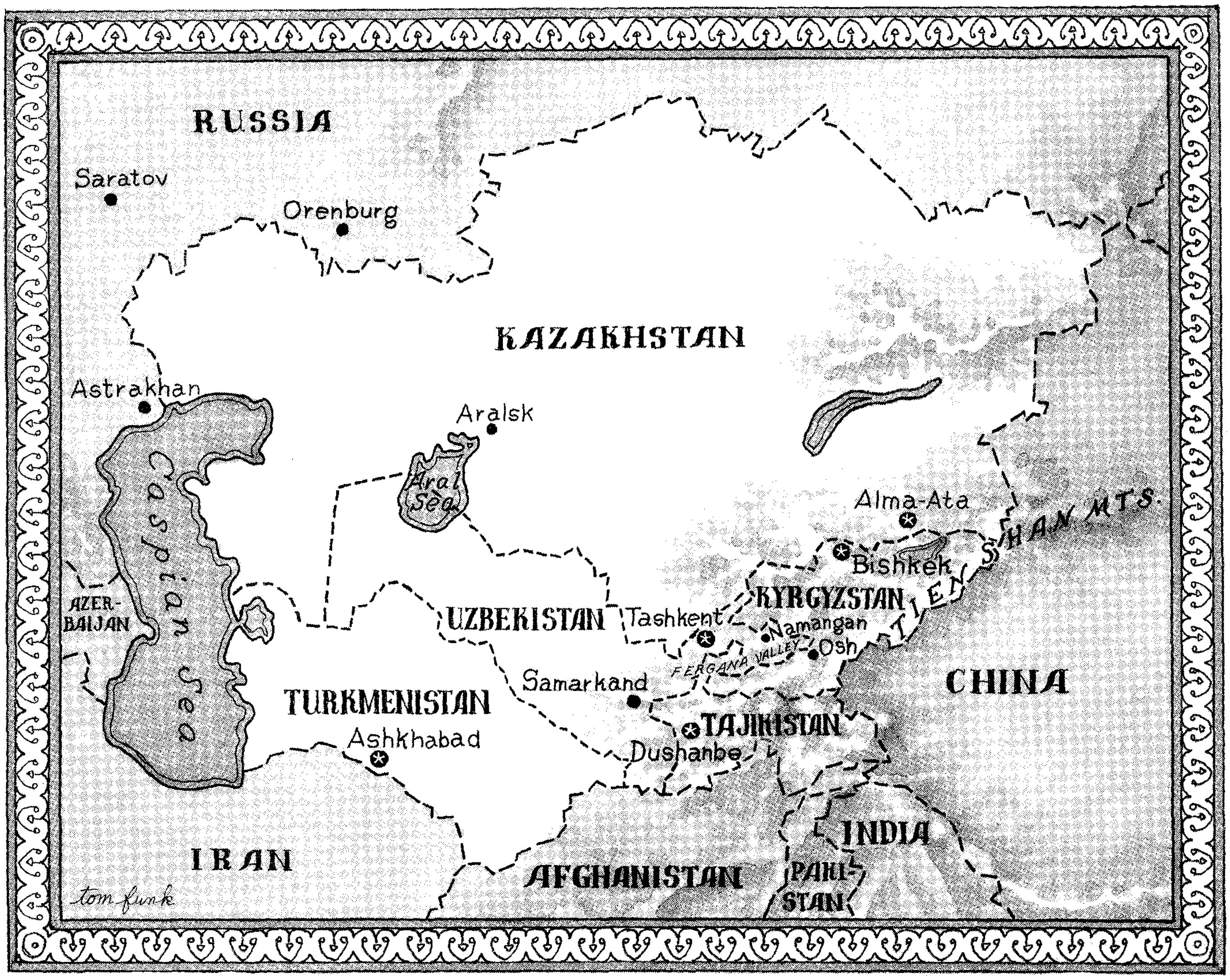
REPORT FROM TURKESTAN



THE Hotel Uzbekistan, in the heart of Tashkent, the Uzbek capital, is a monstrous and monotonous gray block of concrete that arches around an empty plaza. Like many buildings in the ancient city, the hotel was erected after a 1966 earthquake devastated the old landmarks. After the earthquake, the core of Tashkent was rebuilt in a matter of months, with the help of thirty thousand "volunteers" from what were then the Soviet Union's fourteen other republics. A quarter of a century later, parts of Tashkent are still variously referred to as the Riga sector, the Vilnius sector, or the Kiev quarter, after the capitals of republics that contributed labor. The worst sector, Tashkentis tell visitors, is the Ashkhabad quarter, which was built by workers from poor neighboring Turkmenistan.

The reconstruction may have been efficient, but Tashkent, once an oasis stopover for caravans on the old Silk Road across Asia, lost much of its historic flavor. The traces of ancient Greek, Persian, Arab, Mongol, and Turkish civilizations that ruled the region before czarist Russia expanded into Central Asia in the nineteenth century have virtually disappeared. The nondescript Stalinesque architecture, which often makes government complexes, business offices, and apartment high rises indistinguishable, did more than any political-indoctrination campaign to stamp Tashkent with a Soviet ambience. In the sterile and now shabby lobby of the Hotel Uzbekistan, the symbols of a rich Asian culture—colorfully embroidered beaded caps, damascene-like tapestries, and tea sets with their pots and handleless cups—are relegated to souvenir-display shelves.

Yet a half century of czarist rule and more than seven decades of Soviet domination did not completely transform Tashkent or its inhabitants. Sometimes visibly, sometimes beneath the surface, physical and cultural traditions have survived attempts both by monarchs and by Communists to Russify the south. Despite widespread poverty, flowers have remained an essential element of Tashkent life. On the day of the first snow in Moscow last fall, stalks of red gladioli stood almost shoulder high under the Central Asian sun in Tashkent's downtown parks; in the courtyards of simple clay-brick houses in Old Tashkent, pink, white, and red roses were still blooming. Although the Islamic religion was scorned by the czars and banned by the Soviets, its everyday customs have never been abandoned. In little teahouses or open-air bazaars, "*Salaam alaikum*," or "Peace be upon you"—the Islamic greeting common to the nearby Arab world and to Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan—has remained standard among the Uzbeks. And although Moscow imposed its language and its ways, the local heritage has persisted

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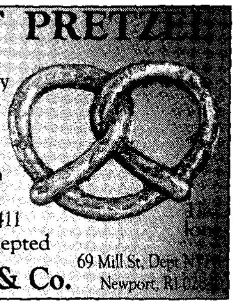

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in life-cycle rituals. At a late-autumn wedding I observed during my first day in Tashkent, the bride kept her head bowed and avoided eye contact in the modest manner of Central Asian brides; the bridegroom wore the gold brocade coat and matching crown, bedecked with feathers, that distinguishes Central Asian bridegrooms.

The legendary hospitality of Central Asians has not disappeared, either. In the hotel lobby, I met a budding entrepreneur named Dilmurad Mohammedaliyev (the Russified version of Muhammad Ali). An unusually large young Uzbek, who could have been a pro fullback, he immediately invited me to another wedding. "If you really want to know about the future of Central Asia, this is where you'll see it," he said. "This is a different kind of marriage—this is a *traditional* wedding."

We drove to a kolkhoz, or state collective, on the outskirts of Tashkent which grew pears, melons, and citrus fruits. White sheets had been draped between high poles to separate guests from the produce, and to separate women from men. As a foreign guest, I was designated an honorary man and invited to sit at one of many long rows of picnic tables covered with big bowls of fruit, plates of cold cuts and cheese, and piles of thick round flatbread and small sticky cakes. Clusters of bottles offered everything from local soda pop to a slightly sweet Uzbek champagne. Platters of kabobs were served while a band played local music and some three hundred men talked noisily.

The "wedding," it turned out, was actually a double ceremony for two brothers, Iskander and Ismail Djalilov, aged three and five. Late in the evening, the little boys, dressed in miniature gold groom's coats and crowns topped by a peacock feather, made their début to receive toasts and gifts. In Uzbek, the ceremony is called a *sunnat toi;* elsewhere it is known as a circumcision. The medical procedure had in fact been performed earlier in the day in the presence of the boys' male relatives. The evening's festivities, celebrating the occasion, were to continue all night and end with a rice breakfast at 6 A.M. "It is the most important event in a male's life until he turns eighteen," Mohammedaliyev explained. "It is called a wedding because it is the ceremony during which a boy-child marries Allah."

For much of the evening, the senior men of the family and their friends sat at the entrance to the kolkhoz greeting guests and chatting. Most wore the black quilted coats and black four-cornered caps with white embroidery so common in Central Asia. Among them was the boys' grandfather Abdul Kayoum Hoja, a kindly old man with a big beard. Unlike his grandchildren, he had deeply slanted eyes. Over the centuries, the intermingling of the nomadic tribes that once roamed the Central Asian steppes and their various conquerors has produced combinations of Indo-European, Turkic, and Mongol features, among others. Even within a family, they can range from very Western to very Asian. After a new "freedom of conscience" law in 1990 formally allowed the practice of religion in the Soviet Union, Kayoum was among the first to make the pilgrimage to Mecca during the annual hajj; "Hoja" is an honorific title added to the beginning or end of names after the pilgrimage. Although he had spent his whole life under Communist rule, Kayoum told me, he had secretly learned, and kept, the faith that first took root in Central Asia in the eighth century. "Two thousand made the hajj in 1990. Five hundred were from Tashkent," he said, smiling proudly. "Islam is now growing very fast. The Islamic public is agitating." His grandsons would have a different upbringing, he predicted, because of the new freedom to practice and teach religion. He hoped that one day Sharia, or Islamic law, would rule the land. With the confidence of a true believer, he said, "Everyone wants an Islamic state."

THE Soviet Union was home to almost sixty million Muslims—the fifth-largest Islamic population in the world, larger than that of any Middle Eastern country. The majority now live in the five former Asian republics: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan—the most isolated and least-known parts of what is now the Commonwealth of Independent States, and perhaps of the world. It wasn't always that way. For centuries, this area was part of Turkestan, which in its medieval glory stretched from Turkey into western China and united diverse peoples and tribes with a common culture, language, and religion.

After Russia absorbed Central Asia

in the nineteenth century, the region was administered by the czars as a single colony, still called Turkestan but by then diminished in size. After the Bolshevik revolution, the Turkestanis, believing they had been liberated from Russian oppression, applied for autonomy. It was denied, which triggered a six-year civil war in the south. At the height of the rebellion, in 1918, a secret conference of the resistance, mobilizing local cultural forces, declared a new state, the Turkestan Independent Islamic Republic. It never had a chance against Russian troops. And when the uprising was finally quashed, in 1925, Stalin moved quickly to prevent new pan-Islamic or pan-Turkic challenges to Communism. Turkestan was carved up, somewhat arbitrarily, into the five republics. The name itself disappeared from the map.

Since the Soviet demise, however, the new Central Asian states have quietly begun another round of upheavals, this time over how to reorganize and reorient their societies. In what was the Soviet Union's most conservative region, a host of explosive political, economic, and social flash points have now emerged. Of the five republics, Turkmenistan (which I did not visit) has so far undergone the least change, even though it shares strategic borders with Iran and Afghanistan. Its land is ninety per cent desert; its capital, Ashkhabad, is, like Tashkent, a Russified oasis of Stalinesque architecture. Turkmenistan was traditionally the quietest Soviet republic, better known for its carpets and its Turkoman horses than for its politics. To no one's surprise, it was one of the last of the Soviet Union's fifteen republics to declare full independence.

Among the new idioms of political and social expression in Central Asia, Islam is one of the most vibrant; in Uzbekistan, its resurgence is visible at every turn. Amid the prams, inner tubes, and school satchels at Kids' World, in downtown Tashkent, the hottest-selling item was a two-volume album of the Koran recorded in the original Arabic; as noteworthy as its availability was the fact that it had been recorded locally. A salesgirl in the store blushed when I asked if she had listened to it. In a land where religion had so long been suppressed and few had publicly admitted their faith, she was now embarrassed to

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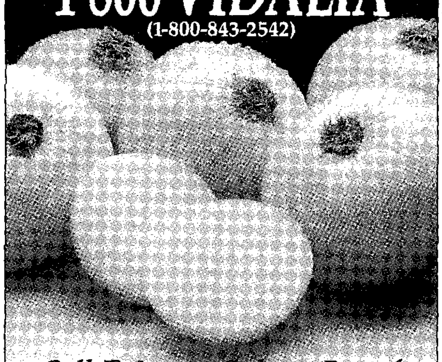

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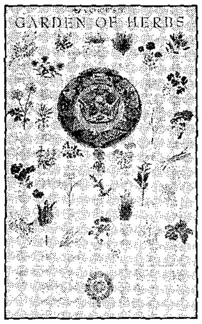

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admit she had not heard it—"I know I should," she added. Though the noisy disco at the Hotel Uzbekistan was filled with women in miniskirts, mainly Russians, a Tashkent cabbie pointed out long white head scarves—symbols of Islamic modesty—being worn by young Uzbek girls milling out of a school as the more prevalent fashion craze.

At Friday prayers on the Muslim Sabbath, the wailing muezzin at the Central Mosque, in Old Tashkent, drew overflow crowds. It was one of the few mosques that had been allowed to remain open during Communist rule, in part because it was controlled by the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Central Asia, headquartered across the street in a majestic fifteenth-century complex with a beautiful azure tiled entrance and a courtyard filled with roses. The Spiritual Directorate was in turn controlled by the Kremlin.

The authority of the Directorate, however, has become a source of dispute in Central Asia; internal struggles and intrigues have weakened its clout. The scuttlebutt in Tashkent over the past year has centered on accusations, made by other mullahs, that the Directorate's chief mufti sold for profit some of the one million Korans that Saudi Arabia had donated for free distribution. The mufti managed to survive a mini-putsch last summer, when he was defeated in an election held by other government-backed mullahs, who were responding in no small part, I was told, to the growing pressure of Islamic activism. Uzbekistan's Communist government declared the election illegal and forcibly put him back in power, but neither move really restored his authority. Scandals aside, the Directorate's real problem is that it is seen as "official" Islam—that is to say, it is supported by the local Communist Party—at a time when the wellspring of support is for "unofficial" Islam, which has been busy since the nineteen-seventies organizing cells to wage a secret war against totalitarian and atheist rule.

Abdullah Ismailov, the chief of the Directorate's international department, was working in a cubbyhole office facing the courtyard. A small man who frequently perfumed his black goatee and mustache from a gold-topped flacon while he talked, Ismailov outlined the dimensions of Islam's growth. "Three years ago, there were about eighty mosques in all Uzbekistan," he said. "Now in the Namangan region alone there are more than a thousand, and Namangan is only one of twelve Uzbek regions. But things are growing so fast that this figure can be obsolete in one day." (Other estimates claim that an average of ten new mosques are opening daily in Central Asia.)

In a niche in Ismailov's office was a quotation from the Koran in six languages—Russian, Arabic, English, Uzbek, Farsi, and French. "In the name of Allah, most gracious, most merciful! Let there arise out of *you* a band of people inviting to all that is good, rejoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity," the English version read. When pressed, Ismailov said he favored adopting Islamic law, eventually. "Yes, I want it," he said. "But you have to learn Islam to start to want it. When enough people know the Sharia, they, too, will want it."

Yet Ismailov told me that he deeply opposed mixing mosque and state. "Certain religious teachings can't be a political force," he explained as he poured me tea. Nor did he want a theocracy to replace the Communists who are still running Uzbekistan, and he distanced himself from the Islamic Renaissance Party, which had emerged from the underground in 1990. "I'm not acquainted with their charter," he said, trying to dismiss the subject. "I'm far from the issue of the political struggle. If they're planning to defend the interests of the Muslim population, which is the majority, then I welcome them. But if they're trying to get power for themselves, and use Islamic slogans to do it, I'm against it. It's not necessary to have a religious leader as head of state. Do you consider the United States a Christian state?"

The American Constitution separates church and state, I replied.

"Is your President a believer?"

I said yes.

"Well, it's no different here," he said, with some irritation.

THE future of Islam may be better judged at the Higher Islamic Institute, a madrasah, or seminary, in Old Tashkent. Like mosques, madrasahs are proliferating in Central Asia, and enrollment is soaring. In a simple classroom with vintage wooden desks, I talked to four mullahs-to-be, all in their middle or late twenties, who had been waiting for years to get into a seminary. One of them, a tall youth from Tajikistan named Suleymon Boltuyev, who carried a huge weathered copy of the Koran, had been waiting since 1982. With the restriction on numbers lifted, the only limitation now is space; from fifty students three years ago, enrollment at the Institute has risen to four hundred, its director told me. Two new madrasahs had opened recently in Tashkent, seven more in other parts of Uzbekistan. "We've got to be proud and thankful to Allah," Boltuyev said of the new religious freedoms, discounting the role of *perestroika*. Boltuyev's mission now, as he sees it, is to spread the word further. "The knowledge of history and science proves Islam to be the only religion in the world that does not lead man astray and to bad deeds," he said. Indeed, all the young seminarians seemed surprised that there might be any question about whether Islam would, in the end, prevail throughout the region.

None of them wanted to copy Iran's Islamic revolution, however. "We want a theocratic state run by the clergy, we want Sharia, but the model of Iran is not suitable," Tsumbai Lyusanov, a soft-spoken young Kyrgyz whose family came from China, told me. "This would not be a militant state. We want no victims and no bloodshed—just peaceful existence." The Muslims of Central Asia are different from their Iranian brethren in another important way as well. Iranian Muslims are predominantly Shiite, but the Muslims in the five republics are overwhelmingly Sunni. In Shiism, the clergy are empowered to intercede between God and man, and thus mullahs and imams like Ayatollah Khomeini are able to play powerful leadership roles in interpreting God's will to the faithful. Among the Sunni, man's relationship with God is direct, and the clergy serve largely as guides or advisers. The difference is sometimes compared to the difference within Christianity, with Catholicism's infallible Pope and strict hierarchy in contrast to the looser structure of Protestant faiths.

Through intermediaries, I then tracked down the leaders of the clandestine Islamic Renaissance Party, or I.R.P. The I.R.P. calls for the overthrow of Communism and the establishment of an Islamic republic, but it eschews religious extremism. Although a branch of the I.R.P. had eventually been allowed to register as a legal party in Moscow, it was initially banned by all five of the conservative Central Asian republics. Uzbekistan's leaders went further: they outlawed all religious parties and any attempt by the clergy to run for parliament. Police raided an I.R.P. constitutional conference held in early 1991, and the leadership has remained underground ever since.

Abdullah Utayev, the I.R.P.'s political chairman—not to be confused with its spiritual leader, the real power in the Party—is a plump Uzbek with a small goatee who works for a publishing company. His first deputy, an affable man named Abdullah Yusuf, is a teacher. Yusuf did most of the talking, with Utayev nodding throughout. "When Western people write about Islam, they talk about its being fanatic, and they use the term 'fundamentalist,'" Yusuf said, leaning forward and speaking intensely. "I'd like to emphasize one thing: we cannot draw a parallel with Iranian society. There is a great difference between the Shia and the Sunni. The spiritual leader who will be a chief of state here should not only be a member of the clergy. He has to know the secular sciences as well. Pakistan is a more suitable model." He hastened to add that Pakistan's system was not exactly what his party had in mind, either. Pakistan is an Islamic republic, but it is headed by a secular leader, and Sharia is only one—not the only—source of its laws. Saudi Arabia, where Sharia is the law but the clergy are only advisers to the monarchy, and where no one votes, is also not a model, he said. "We have our own, different ideas. What we really want is an Islamic democracy, although all the elements of democracy are in Islam, so we don't need to add the word."

How did their party define an Islamic democracy?

"With our people, the notion of democracy means no restrictions," Yusuf said. It would not be a one-party state; the franchise would be universal; the rights of ethnic and religious minorities would be protected; and private property would be honored. But the I.R.P.'s Islamic democracy would in fact have some restric-

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tions. "Anti-Islamic" practices, for example, would be forbidden. "This means that all those things which are no good for humanity—drugs, drink, prostitution—must not be allowed," he said. Nor would tolerance be universal, even toward Muslims. "All the people appointed to Muslim posts in past years had to get the permission from the state," Yusuf said. "Not all are legitimate members of the clergy. All who work for the Directorate will have to go."

And how long would it be before this Islamic state took root?

"Only Allah knows," Yusuf answered, shaking his head. "But mankind is moving so fast. We didn't think the events of the past six years could take place even in fifty years."

THE Gur-Amir Mausoleum is the highlight of Samarkand, Uzbekistan's oldest city. Samarkand first became a crossroads between East and West under Alexander the Great, a role it retained for almost two thousand years—until ships replaced land caravans for international trade. The mausoleum—a towering complex surrounding a courtyard which contains a mosque, a madrasah, and quarters for the ascetic dervishes—was built in the fifteenth century, at the time of Samarkand's greatest glory.

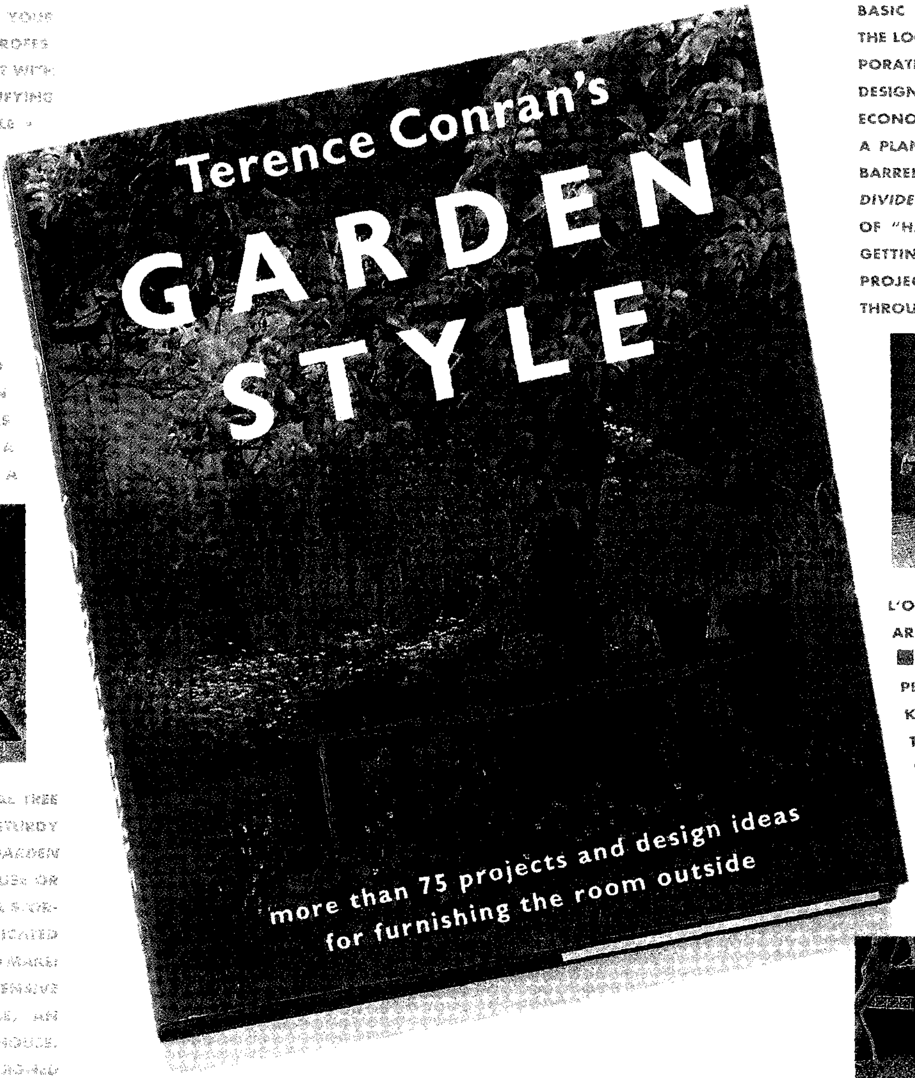
I arrived at the mausoleum early one morning, before it had opened; a young Uzbek militiaman in an ill-fitting gray uniform was still preparing for the first tourists. When I pressed him with questions that a brief history on the front wall, in Russian, did not answer, he invited me inside for a look before the crowds came. The centuries have done their damage to the shrine's exterior, but the interior has been restored to its original splendor. Sunlight shines through arched windows and reflects from high walls decorated with intricate blue-and-gilt mosaics; the light inside seems golden.

On the floor were six sarcophagi, five of light marble surrounding one of greenish-black jade. The one in the middle marks the official resting place of the fourteenth-century warrior-king Timur the Lame, so called because of a limp, who is better known in the West as Tamerlane. Next to him rest two sons, at his head a beloved teacher. The militiaman, who introduced himself as Zayniddin, talked at some length of Timur's expansion of old Turkestan—through conquests in Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, southern Russia, Syria, Turkey, and India—and of the development of Samarkand, his exotic capital. Then, looking at the sarcophagi, he sheepishly confessed, "These are only models. They were put here at the time of Timur's death. He ordered it done that way." After a pause, he asked, "Would you like to see the real ones?"

We went outside and made our way around the building to an innocuous little door in the rear. Zayniddin unfastened a padlock at the top and led me into a small underground crypt. The unadorned brick vault also contained six sarcophagi, which were positioned exactly like those in the room above, but were of simpler white stone. The top of Timur's real tomb was engraved with his autobiography. At the bottom, Timur had added a warning that anyone who opened his grave would start a major war. Despite local protests, Zayniddin told me, the sarcophagus was opened by Soviet authorities in June, 1941. Four days later, he added solemnly, Hitler's armies attacked.

Although Timur is known to the outside world for his ruthless military tactics, his rule is regarded by many in Central Asia as a period of greatness, not only for the prosperous empire he built but for the achievements of Islamic culture, particularly science and the arts. After Zayniddin relocked the crypt, he stood still for a few moments before returning to his duties. "What we need is a new Timur to build a new Turkestan," he said. "I dream that a day will come when our republics unite and renew the ancient name. It would be good for Central Asia. It may be our only hope of survival."

ACROSS from the Hotel Uzbekistan is a bright-yellow building with classical white columns which looks a little like a giant doll house and serves as the headquarters of the Writers' Union. I went there to meet Abdulrahim Pulatov, who is the leader of Birlik, a populist pro-democracy movement that was founded in 1988. Like the I.R.P., Birlik, which means Unity, is outlawed in Uzbekistan. I asked Pulatov, a physicist, about the prospects of reuniting Turkestan—first in Central Asia, and then to its old boundaries across the continent. "For a hundred and thirty-five years, we've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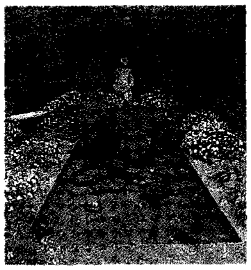

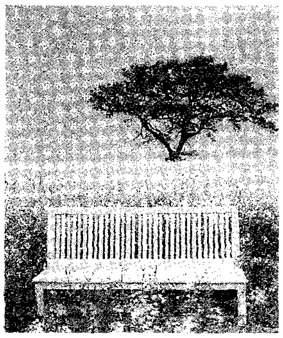

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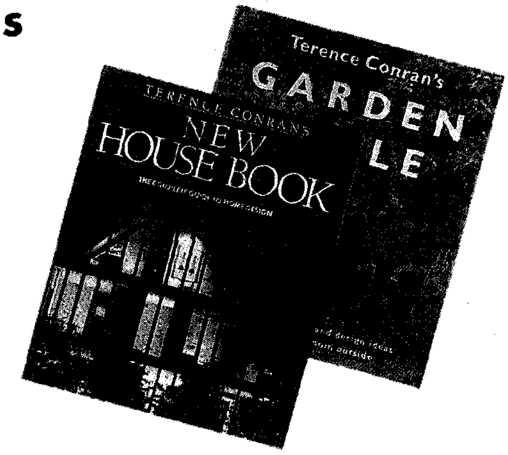

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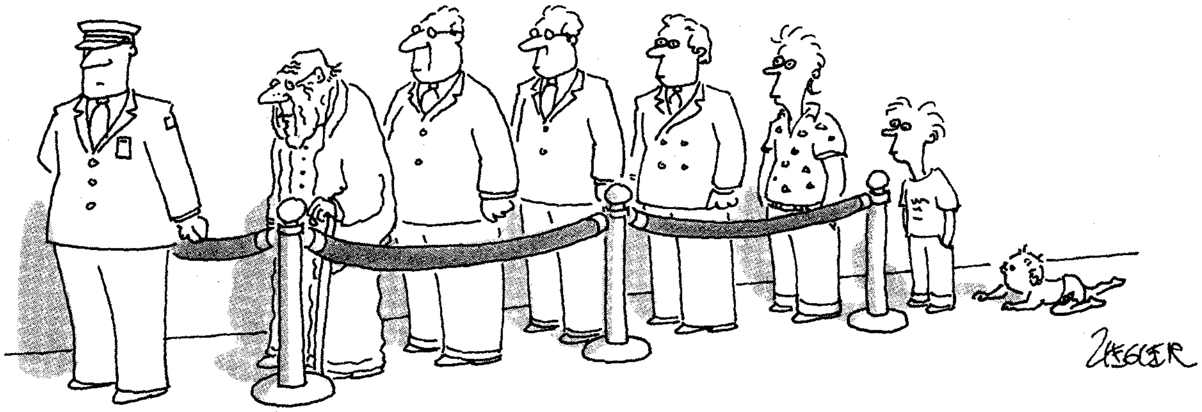

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been a colony, and now we've got independence," he said. "Democracy is the first step, but what comes after that is a big question. Here people have approximately the same culture and language. Joint economic and environmental problems also unite us. So working together is both logical and efficient. Our movement is not against ties with Russia. Every normal and sane politician thinks that turning only to Asia is impossible, because, especially in the cities, Europe has had an impact. But we have to think about which ties will be most profitable, which are most natural. We will broaden our contact with Islamic and Asian countries. We have to communicate with neighbors from whom we've been separated for seventy years. This is the future." As for the re-creation of old Turkestan, Pulatov added, "Doubtless, in my lifetime there will be a Turkestan that extends beyond Central Asia."

Turkestan, however, takes various shapes in the minds of Birlik's members and sympathizers. Some see it as a tightly knit state with a central set of laws and a central administration; others see it as a loose confederation. Jamal Kamal, who is the most famous Uzbek writer and has translated nine Shakespearean plays into Uzbek, later told me, "Turkestan will not be one solid, united state. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and the others will continue. Each will still have its own name. Turkestan will be more like a cultural and economic federation. Maybe only after many years it will be one state."

Birlik officials agreed that they have no aggressive agenda and no desire to forcibly weld together parts or all of other states. They also stressed that their version of Turkestan is not an Islamic state. "The model is Turkey," Pulatov said. "The state is secular and has modern industry and connections with both Europe and Asia. But the power of religion is much stronger here than in Turkey. There are people who believe that the best model is Iran or Pakistan or Saudi Arabia or Afghanistan, although most of them only have a superficial knowledge of how any of those countries are run. People simply haven't had any information about those places in seventy years. The ones who do know something turn to Turkey."

Birlik is not anti-Islamic. Indeed, Birlik and the "unofficial" Islamists regularly consult and work together against the Communist government in Tashkent, and many Islamists share the goal of restoring the old state. "Turkestan is also our dream," Abdullah Yusuf, the deputy I.R.P. chairman, had told me. "Islam does not have a notion of nationality. Islam knows only a believer and a nonbeliever. Now we face the fact that Europe will be one state, with no borders. Turkestan, as we see it, will be like the European Community. It says in Islam that people have to unite and have no wars between them." And Birlik officials, assuming their own victory in any new election, suggested that Islamists would be included in an opposition government. But in the long term Pulatov and others in Birlik are wary of the Islamic tide. "The longer the Communists try to block democracy, the greater are the prospects for an Islamic takeover," Pulatov said. "We need to avoid the rise of the Islamic movement in Turkestan."

At the moment, however, Turkestan is little more than a dream, albeit one with a lot of potential. As the crow flies, Tashkent is only about two hundred miles from the Afghan border, three hundred miles from the Chinese border, and some five hundred and fifty miles from the Iranian border. Although Turkestan once included parts of all three countries, major transport links between Central Asia and its neighbors are still routed via Moscow. Thus, to get to any neighboring state in the south a Tashkenti has to fly almost seventeen hundred miles northwest, through three time zones, to Moscow, and then fly back over the same territory on an international carrier. Since 1989, the border has become a bit more porous for buses and trucks—most notably between Turkmenistan and Iran, and between Kyrgyzstan and China—but the job of re-creating Turkestan would require a physical as well as a political overhaul.

A bigger obstacle may be represented by the tall brown cotton stalks and their bulbous white blooms which dominate the Central Asian landscape. On a Sunday afternoon at the peak of the harvest, I caught up with Crew No. 6—thirty men, women, and children responsible for seventy hectares—in the vast fields surrounding Tashkent. Wearing a white bandanna over his head to ward off the sun, a picker named Ravshan Sagdibayev deftly pulled off the soft cotton puffs and dropped them in a deep sack. "You can tell when they're about to blossom by these little spots," he explained, pointing out half a dozen brownish pimples on a bud. "We'll get this one at the next picking, but even if you plucked it off now it'd still bloom."

The original supply of seed for Central Asian cotton came from the United States in the eighteen-sixties, Sagdibayev told me. "These were only small fields before. Now there is little else." After the American Civil War cut off supplies of cotton, Russia turned to its

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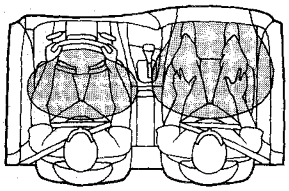

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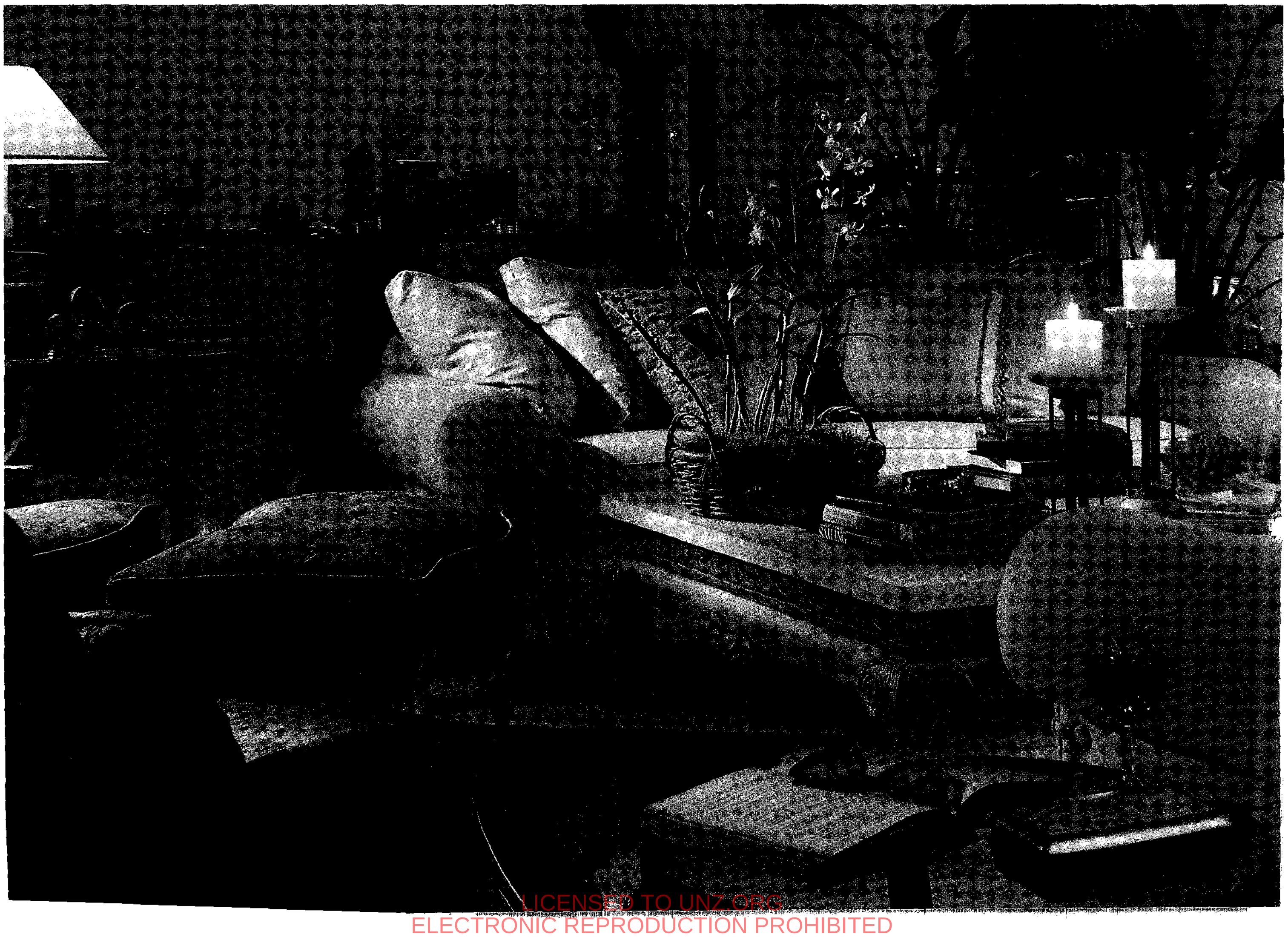
newly conquered colony in the south, which had the requisite fair climate and abundant water. Later, under Soviet rule, the kolkhozes and the sovkhozes, or state farms, in all five Asian republics increasingly turned to cotton production. By the early nineteen-eighties, the cotton crop of Uzbekistan alone almost matched the entire American yield, and cotton had become a major Soviet export to some thirty countries.

The high productivity came at a cost. Cotton, the Uzbeks like to say, is a monoculture dictatorship. It is estimated to account for forty per cent of the labor force of Uzbekistan and to consume sixty per cent of all its resources. To meet ever-increasing quotas, other crops—mainly fruits and vegetables—and livestock grazing have been abandoned or cut back. The Soviet regime also stopped rotating cotton crops with alfalfa, and thereby depleted the soil's nutrients; pesticides were overused, and local rivers were drained for irrigation. Pressure for higher yields eventually resulted in the so-called Cotton Scandal of the early nineteen-eighties, when dozens of Uzbek officials were arrested and tried for falsifying yields to match rising production quotas that they could not meet.

The over-all result has been an ecological and health disaster. The Aral Sea, which was once the world's fourth-largest inland lake, has shrunk to sixty per cent of its former size, because the two rivers that flowed into it were diverted for cotton-field irrigation. The former port city of Aralsk is now more than twenty-five miles from its shoreline. People are faring no better than the environment. Hundreds of thousands of cotton pickers have been exposed to poisonous insecticides and to defoliants, which, studies have shown, make them up to sixty per cent more likely to suffer from nervous and intestinal disorders and jaundice.

The cotton monoculture has been an economic disaster as well. For cotton, as for agricultural produce and raw materials from all fifteen republics, Moscow paid artificially low prices. Then it converted the cotton into cloth and other consumer goods at factories in the industrial Russian heartland and sold them back—or abroad—for top ruble. Little of the profit was used to develop the Central Asian republics, and they were left with few resources and limited goods to trade with their Asian neighbors. Figures for 1989 show the Central Asian republics to have been the poorest; the annual per-capita income in Uzbekistan was less than half of Russia's. Now, with production and crop yields declining, and shortages of equipment and of spare parts for antiquated machines growing throughout the Commonwealth, simply maintaining the old standard of living everywhere will be tough.

Uzbekistan does have food. The outdoor stalls at the bazaars in Old Tashkent and Samarkand were laden with fruit and vegetables. Old women and young men hawked pomegranates, lemons, red and green peppers, huge tomatoes, eggplants, scallions, fat carrots, radishes, a wide assortment of nuts, the mainstay potato, mounds of fresh spices, and dozens of other fresh foods. Corners of parking lots were filled with piles of watermelons and cantaloupes. My interpreter, a nineteen-year-old student from Moscow State University who revelled in the foods unavailable at home, bought



and ate so much that he was violently sick the next day. In a two-story indoor market at the Tashkent bazaar, the only lines were for frozen chickens and pigs' feet, the latter a Russian delicacy that infuriates local Muslims. There, too, long sausages hung neatly from a rod, and butchers with big axes chopped beef sides and horse meat into fillets.

But food is expensive. Sagdibayev, the cotton picker, earns about twenty-eight rubles a day—the equivalent of less than a dollar—and must support a family of five. "And prices in the shops are growing even faster," he added. The cost of a single lemon was four rubles on the day I visited Tashkent's bazaar, and I watched an elderly Russian couple buy thirty-five pounds of potatoes, as much as the two could carry, for fear the price would soon rise again. Yet, according to some local analysts, the economies of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are the only two in Central Asia that have even a distant hope of becoming viable on their own; in mountainous Tajikistan, ninety-five per cent of the land is not arable.

Together, however, the five Central Asian republics are willing to gamble that they have a chance. Last August, a week before the Moscow putsch, they held a summit in Tashkent and solidified the framework of a Central Asian common market. The pact reduces trade barriers and opens the way for barter deals among the republics. In effect, it created a new economic bloc, bringing together fifty million people in a region stretching from the Caspian Sea to the Chinese border.

Then, this February, four of the five—Kazakhstan is still an observer—joined Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan in a broader Economic Coöperation Organization, nicknamed the Islamic Common Market. The new Asian states are slowly but steadily moving away from the Commonwealth's European republics. If the pace continues, one of the new frontiers between Europe and Asia may run right throughout the Commonwealth.

THE center of Alma-Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan (or "land of the Kazakhs"), is dominated by a leafy park dedicated to Russian war heroes, including those who settled Central Asia. In the center is a giant house of pastel pink with white columns and white trim, topped by four gold cupolas, which was built during the Romanov era as a Russian Orthodox cathedral. The feel of urban Kazakhstan, in its design and its symbols, is pure Russian.

Czarist Russia first entered Central Asia through Kazakhstan, and it is the only southern republic with which Russia shares a border. The legendary cossack light cavalry beat back the vestiges of the Great, Middle, and Small Hordes in the eighteenth century; Russian authorities moved in to colonize the territory and replace the princely khans in the mid-nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, Stalin strengthened Russian rule by forcing millions to resettle in the south. (Only recently have the Kazakhs, with forty per cent of the population, again become the largest ethnic group in their own land; Russians are down to thirty-eight per cent.) Under the czars, all personal names were Russified. In the nineteen-twenties, Moscow ordered that the Latin alphabet replace Arabic script, which had been used since Central

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Asians embraced Islam, in the eighth century; in the nineteen-forties, it replaced the Latin alphabet with the Slavic Cyrillic alphabet. The effect was to limit the use of Kazakh to homes and the streets, making the Kazakhs functionally illiterate in their own language. Russian colonial authorities and settlers also replaced traditional tribal and clan leaders in Kazakhstan's grassy steppes, where its nomads had grazed livestock for centuries. Although various Communist leaders eventually brought Kazakhs into the Party and then into top leadership positions—the criterion often being compliance rather than competence—Russians always ran the show, either from secondary positions inside the republic or from on high in Moscow. Thanks to greater literacy levels and better training, Russians also dominated the skilled professions. Only in 1989 did the balance of power begin to change significantly. Besides the freedom-of-conscience law, which reconnected the republics to the roots of Central Asian culture, another new law allowed them to use their own languages again. Now Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Turkmen are all gradually replacing Russian as the official government languages; in Kazakhstan, certain jobs are restricted to speakers of Kazakh. All five republics also have plans to revert eventually to either the Latin or the Arabic alphabet.

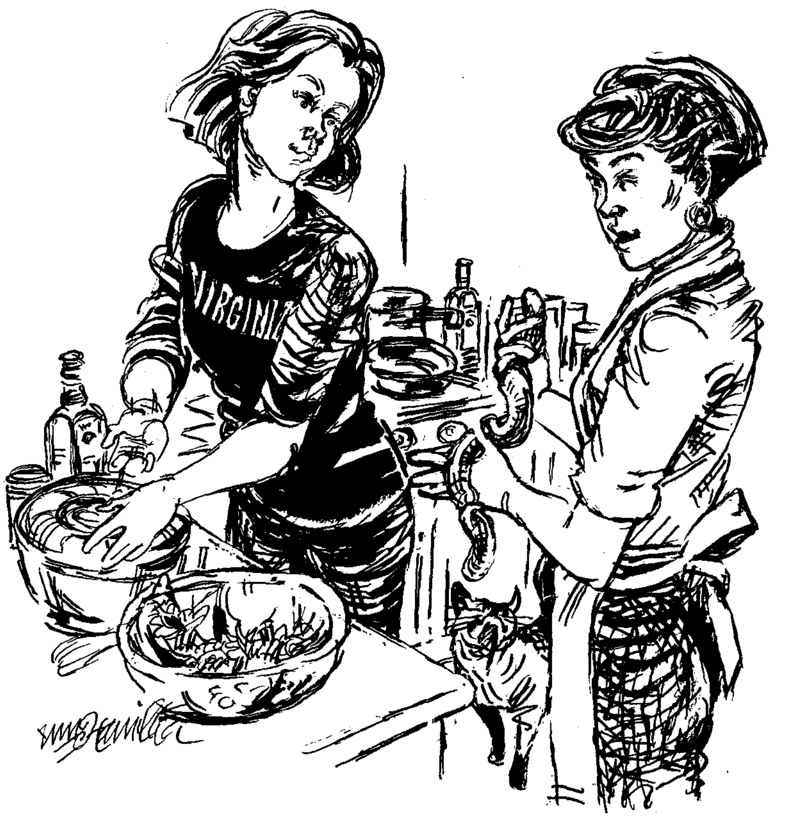
The effects of the new language law were apparent at a school I visited on the outskirts of Alma-Ata where the city begins to rise toward the snowcapped Tien Shan Mountains. The facility, built of concrete, is in fact two schools, each for all ages: School No. 145 is for Kazakh students; No. 45 is for Russians and twenty minorities.

"After the language law was passed, some Kazakh parents asked for a separate school, so their children wouldn't lose their language," Aleksandr Baraskevich, a Russian science teacher with a blond walrus mustache, told me. "Frankly, the initial demand was to remove all Russian kids from the school and to give it to the Kazakhs." After heated debate, a compromise was worked out: until a new school could be built across the street for the Kazakhs, the two student bodies would be physically separated in the existing school. In September, 1990, when the fall term began, a heavy steel-mesh fence was erected on the first floor to segregate the ethnic groups. A white bust of Lenin and a red flag went to the Russian side. A few weeks later, an explosive device went off under one of the school entryways a few feet from the fence, set off by persons still unidentified. The next day, the headmaster took the fence down. But it was no longer needed; the division had been established.

Long before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the language law had begun to change the social landscape of Central Asia. "The emphasis now is on roots, tradition," Baraskevich said. "History classes in both schools deal with Kazakhstan's independent history as well as with the Soviet era. Russian students also now have to take Kazakh language classes. And there's a special privilege for Kazakh kids: they do Russian as a foreign language." More than ninety per cent of the Russians in all five Central Asian republics never learned the local language, whereas the Asians had to know Russian in order to function in society. Segregation, however, may not be the right alternative, Baraskevich told me. "It's not good to separate kids," he said. "If they are physically separated, then psychological barriers will come next. Over a generation, this could have a major impact. Frankly, most of the students don't understand why the decision was taken."

Teachers in the Kazakh half of the school told a somewhat different story. "For our pity, the Kazakh children haven't known their language," Dina Begezhanova, a dark-haired young Kazakh teacher, told me as we sat in a small office filled with children's desks. "They haven't known the history of our nationality. They are hungry for their own identity and to be proud of who they are. Things are slowly improving. Now there are about thirty Kazakh schools. But still there are problems. One of the biggest is books. There are no Kazakh texts for chemistry, engineering, or English. Classes one through three have no books at all in Kazakh, so they still use Russian books, which teachers must translate into Kazakh. One of the problems is just finding ways to print things in Kazakh. It's a real problem, you know, finding a Kazakh typewriter."

The end result is a gradual transformation: the once dominant Russians and the second-class Asians are beginning to swap positions. Unless the Russians learn Kazakh, they will become the functionally illiterate. Their reaction includes both fear and anger. Vitaly, my Russian taxi-driver, whose grandparents had been exiled to Kazakhstan from Saratov, in southern Russia, in 1922, reflected on the changes. "Before *perestroika*, everything was fine. No one talked about nationalities. It was so calm and peace-



"Don is more like network, and Evan is more like cable."

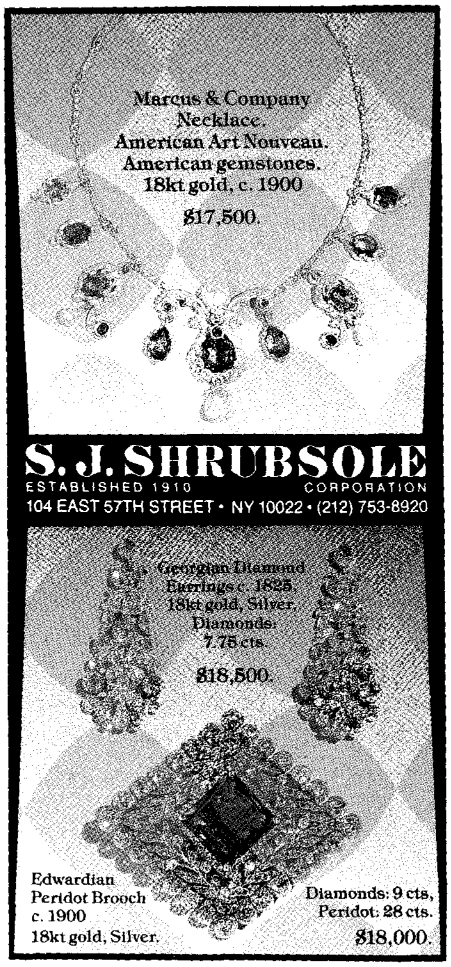
ful," he told me one day as we drove around Alma-Ata in his cab, a twelve-year-old red Chigaly with a cracked windshield and a tarantula, encased in plastic, in the gearshift knob. "But after *perestroika* people began to say to Russians, 'Go home, go back to Russia'—even to old people on buses. Before *perestroika*, there were no Kazakhs working in the stores. Now they're all over the place. You don't know what will happen next. We're sitting on a powder keg here. We'll be refugees, that's for sure. If there were anyplace else for us, I would have gone by now. But there's no place else for us." Indeed, unlike the colonists of other abandoned European empires, Russian colonists cannot just pack up and go home. With huge housing shortages and the prospect of mass layoffs in the conversion to a free-market economy, Russia cannot absorb its troops returning from Eastern Europe, much less the roughly twenty-five million Russians dispersed throughout the Commonwealth. Some Russian cities are officially "closed," because of overpopulation or limited housing, and in others getting housing requires wealth or highly marketable skills.

Vitaly, a tall, lumbering man who favored a denim jacket and a blue cap, had no inhibitions about expressing his feelings toward Kazakhs. As we drove on a rural road one day, two shepherd dogs helping a young Kazakh herder on horseback corral his cattle strayed into the road. When I urged Vitaly to be careful not to hit the dogs, he responded, "Don't worry. Those dogs are smarter than any Kazakh." Another time, he told me, "Like everyone with slant eyes, the Kazakhs are not capable of doing anything for themselves. If they drive all the other nations away, they'll begin losing and they'll go back to living in yurts." Although on the surface Alma-Ata is a distinctly quiet and peaceful place, Vitaly pulled out an icepick that he said he had recently begun keeping under the floor mat of his car. "Don't go out after nine," he warned me. "You'll come back naked. Gangs of Kazakh kids attack you in the dark and leave you with nothing."

I had heard similar tales in Uzbekistan, whose population of twenty million includes one and a half million Russians; Russians account for eight per cent of the population in Tajikistan, nine per cent in Turkmenistan, and twenty-two per cent in Kyrgyzstan. On a Sunday at Tashkent's Upensky Orthodox Cathedral, parishioners buying thin brown candles before morning services crowded around to talk. "Russians don't have any future here. We're waiting for the massacre by the nationalists to break out any day," a middle-aged Russian named Alexandra Kozlova told me. Another woman, Varvara Zhakova, a frail eighty-five-year-old who had come from Siberia with her parents, told me, "We've seen everything. My mother, my father were whipped by Stalin's people. In the past, if you weren't with the Communist Party it was hard to get a job or a promotion. Now you can't get ahead unless you're with the Uzbeks." Tears trickled down her cheeks. "My daughter has her doctorate, but they don't want to give her a job because she's Russian."

Vladimir Razumov, a forty-two-year-old Aeroflot pilot, was less emotional but no less worried. "I was born here and my children were born here, so I'm not eager to leave. I like Uzbeks, and I don't feel persecution. But things have changed. At the beginning of 1991, there was a big argument. The boss said that there should be no more Russian supervisors—that Uzbeks should replace them. Others said supervisors should rise by merit, not nationality. Now it's policy to make more Uzbeks into pilots," he told me. Razumov has started reading *Aviation Week* in search of a job with a foreign airline. "Who's waiting for me in Russia? No one. And there's no place to live," he said. "The only hope for a lot of Russians in these republics is to go abroad, because Uzbekistan is very unstable for us. I fear we'll be either expelled or forced to go."

THE Kazakhs see things differently, of course. Bakhytzhan Khasanov, a big, burly man with white hair, who looks like a Kazakh version of Lorne Greene, is a social linguist at Alma-Ata's Institute of Philosophy and Law and one of the authors of the republic's language law. "This is rubbish," he said of Russians' fears. "If we were going to ask the Russians to leave, we'd do it openly. So far, we have no conflicts with the Russian population. In fact, Kazakhstan is the calmest republic." Any disturbances, including a recent incident between Kazakhs and the cossacks, were insti-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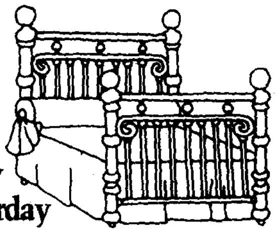
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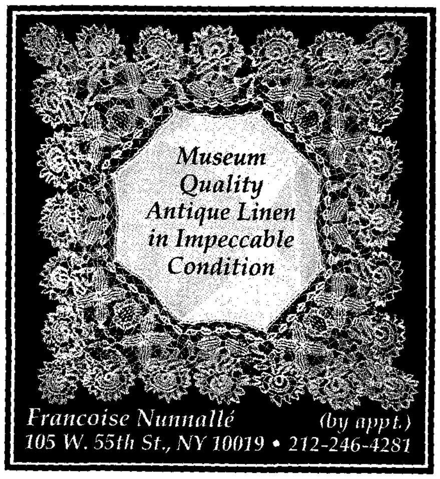
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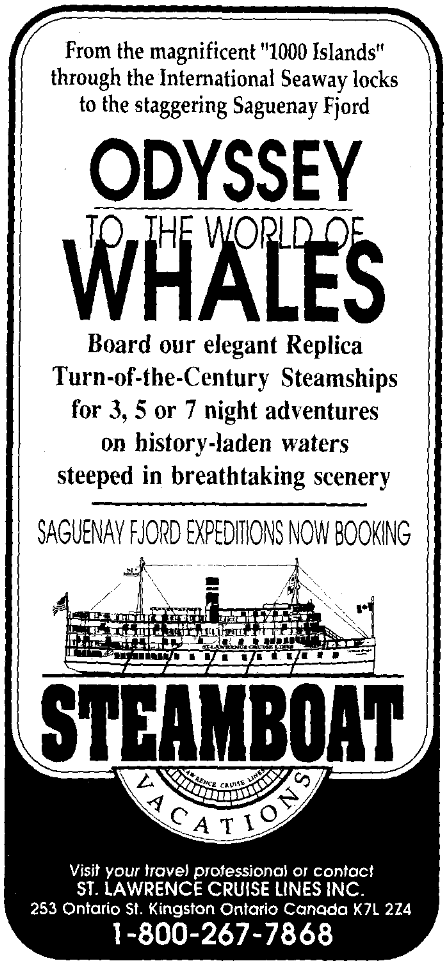
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gated by Russians. In that incident, which occurred in mid-September in northern Uralsk, minor clashes broke out between Kazakh nationalists and cossacks brandishing Russian flags who were celebrating four hundred years of allegiance to Russia. No one was killed, but the seriousness of the episode was reflected when the Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, told Boris Yeltsin that the Russian military commemoration on Kazakh land demonstrated “open disrespect” for his republic’s sovereignty. The message itself was a serious event. The Presidents of the two largest republics had collaborated to foil the August coup and are considered the cornerstones of coöperation within the new Commonwealth.

The real problem, Khasanov told me, was not Kazakh attitudes toward Russians but Russian intentions in Kazakhstan—especially the growing talk of creating an autonomous Russian region, or even of seceding. “Nowadays, there are many separatists among the Russians,” he said. “They would like to annex several eastern regions of Kazakhstan to Russia, because Russians are the majority there. They don’t want to stay in Kazakhstan. They don’t want to learn the Kazakh language. So they want to take the land back with them to Russia. It’ll never happen. Whose are most of the graves of those who fought for this land, Russian or Kazakh? Whose songs have the lore of this land, Russian or Kazakh? We want some lands back, too, from Russia. The first Kazakh capital was in Orenburg, in the nineteen-twenties. Now it’s Russian territory. Saratov, Astrakhan, Orenburg—these are all cities of Kazakhstan now under the Russian flag. We aren’t going to listen to cossack nationalists anymore.”

I pressed him about the possibility of open conflict between Russians and Central Asians. The last bloodshed in Alma-Ata, in 1986, involved Kazakh-Russian clashes over the replacement of the Kazakh Communist Party chief by a Russian leader. Since the Soviet demise, Presidents Nazarbayev and Yeltsin have, in theory, preëmpted potential border disputes by agreeing to the current frontiers; few of either the Russians or the Kazakhs I interviewed, however, believed that the agreement would hold.

“I believe that ethnic conflict will go on, but in a concealed way, not vividly manifested,” Khasanov predicted. “But, if it should come into the open, it will lead to a catastrophe.”

As the empire breaks up, the redefining of the relationship between the colonized Central Asians and their former Russian masters, now shorn of their Soviet cover and might, will play a major role in shaping the longer-term status of both. Russians still widely view the Russian presence as a civilizing influence on Central Asia; Central Asians now openly express the view that Russians usurped their rich and ancient civilization. Even if all the Russians in Kazakhstan were to “go home,” not all the potential problems would disappear. Unlike the colonies of other empires, which were continents away, Russia’s former territories would be on its borders—most notably the strategic three-thousand-mile border with Kazakhstan.

In the new Commonwealth, the Asian republics can no longer be considered less important than the European ones. In area, Kazakhstan, which is larger than Western Europe, is also larger than the thirteen other non-Russian republics combined, and it has a nuclear arsenal and substantial oil and mineral wealth. Uzbekistan, with its twenty million people, has the third-largest population of the republics (it is surpassed by Russia and Ukraine); Kazakhstan, with almost seventeen million, is fourth. And the growth has not stopped. Between 1960 and 1980, the Asian populations of the Soviet Union grew almost four times as fast as the Russian population.

The bitterness between nationalities and the widening population imbalance between them are among the most explosive flash points in Central Asia. Both are exacerbated by a deteriorating economy, which is expected to get much worse before it gets better. Unemployment is already estimated to have reached at least ten per cent throughout Central Asia. In some rural areas, where high birth rates have produced a large corps of poor, untrained youth, unemployment is as high as thirty per cent. The implicit promise of economic growth from free markets may go unmet, because of the strain on resources, such as water, from increasing populations.

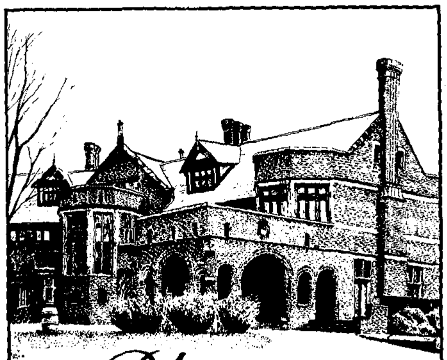
Indeed, since 1989 virtually all the Central Asian violence that is attributed to ethnic differences has really come down to rivalries over resources. Riots erupted in Tajikistan in 1990 when rumors swept the republic that Armenian refugees were to be given preference in housing over families who had been on waiting lists for decades. After twenty people were killed, Moscow dispatched troops to end the fighting. In the densely populated Fergana Valley, which spills over from Uzbekistan into Kyrgyzstan, at least two hundred and fifty were killed in clashes that same year, when a Kyrgyz Party boss transferred land from an Uzbek-populated kolkhoz to some landless Kyrgyz. A year earlier, in another part of the valley, Uzbeks had attacked Meskhetian Turks—Muslims who had been deported from Georgia by Stalin—over allegations that they were getting preference in jobs. Elsewhere, Kyrgyz and Tajiks have clashed over rights to limited land and dwindling water supplies. In the past, Russians were largely immune, since they were protected by the threat that Moscow would dispatch Soviet troops in the event of anti-Russian unrest. But with the collapse of the center, and decades of pent-up hostility now coming into the open, Russians feel, whatever the reality, that they are now "primary targets." As Vitaly put it, "it's just a matter of time."

AN American official visiting Kazakhstan in September described President Nazarbayev as "way ahead of anybody else" in Central Asia. A shepherd's son and former steelworker, he had long been an advocate of power sharing between Moscow and the republics. He tried to help Gorbachev save face after the August coup by introducing the idea of transferring power from the Kremlin to a council made up of the republics' leaders—over which Gorbachev would preside. And after the coup he quit the Communist Party. When the Kazakh Communists reconstituted themselves as the Socialist Party, Nazarbayev declared he would run as an independent in the December Presidential elections. (To no one's surprise, since there were no other candidates, he won.) And, with the help of a Korean-American adviser, he has also been at the forefront of economic reform.

Yet, for all the current acclaim, Nazarbayev is, at best, a political centrist; his enthusiasm for a market economy is not matched by an enthusiasm for promoting democratic reforms. Despite opposition demands, he has not broken former Communist Party officials' hold on the local K.G.B., the military, or the judicial system. Although public-opinion polls indicate that less than twenty per cent of the population, including its Russians, supports the Party, Communists still occupy all but twenty of three hundred and fifty-eight seats in parliament. A host of opposition parties have been legalized, but Nazarbayev has not moved to form one of his own or to support any of the others, as Yeltsin supported Russia's Democratic Party. The result has been political stagnation; the former Communists remain the single dominant force.

Nazarbayev is not solely responsible; the disparate opposition groups are fledgling. In contrast to the situation in Uzbekistan, the populace has not as yet been impassioned by any fiery cause, which was evident one day at an outdoor shopping mall in Alma-Ata. In the middle were two giant yurts, surrounded by a small crowd listening to a succession of speakers—a scene more reminiscent of the soapbox speakers at Hyde Park than of the mass opposition rallies in Prague before the velvet revolution. Outside one of the yurts, which was flying a green flag with a silver moon, I met Rashid Beis, chairman of the executive council of Alash, an Islamic nationalist movement in Kazakhstan. Beis, a big, bearded Kazakh in a suit jacket, invited me into what he referred to as the movement's mobile headquarters; it had been set up on September 5th, he said—two days after a Kazakh law allowing opposition parties was passed. The handful of proselytizing Alash politicians regularly preached on Alma-Ata's streets from 9 A.M. until two the next morning, Beis told me; then they bedded down inside the yurt, which was furnished with a gas stove and a dining area.

Alash, named after the mythical ancestor of the Kazakh people, has a range of demands. "The minimum is a free Kazakhstan. The maximum is a free republic of Turkestan," Beis said as we sat cross-legged on the yurt's elevated floor. "At present, we agree to secular power. At present, we understand we can't have purely Islamic power. But if we have secular leaders who are also Muslims, then the laws passed won't conflict with



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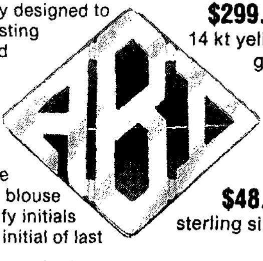

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Islamic law. In the future, an Islamic state of Turkic-speaking people, with the clergy as rulers, is our ideal."

For all the passion and eloquence of the Alash speakers who were carrying on outside the yurt, the Islamic movement in Kazakhstan is comparatively tame. Mosques are proliferating, and new religious schools are opening throughout the republic, but the turnout at Friday prayers during my visit was no more impressive than the size of the congregations at Russian Orthodox churches. As is true throughout Central Asia, Islamic feelings run much deeper in rural areas, but so far the people there lack leadership or links with other villages that might turn Islam into a national force. I remarked to Beis that the crowd outside his headquarters was small, and he conceded that his Uzbek counterparts had made deeper inroads. "Those who support us are numerous, but we don't have a membership, because the population is poorly politicized," he explained. "We have no mass media to reach the people's hearts and minds."

But even a small following apparently represented a threat. In March, seven members of Alash were arrested for "insulting" Nazarbayev and holding unauthorized rallies. They were the first political prisoners detained since Kazakhstan became independent.

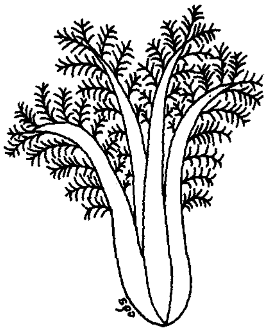
In the yurt next door was Zheltoksan, or the December Party, named after the December, 1986, clashes over the firing of the Kazakh Communist Party chief, Dinmukhamed Kunayev—the only Kazakh ever to serve on the Politburo. Batry Kudaibergenov, a wiry little man, literally pulled me inside to talk; by then, there was no one outside to listen to him. The December Party, he explained, had six demands. "We want an independent Kazakh state. We want to have a national republic army, and not continue contributing to one under Soviet control. We want a new law allowing the three million Kazakhs living outside the republic to come home. We also want freedom for two political prisoners held since 1986, an explanation for the three hundred missing since then, and the trial of forty-four officials who were responsible for ordering troops to act against the people in 1986." Throughout Central Asia, the recurrent theme, in different forms and on diverse issues, is the past: it has to be dealt with or incorporated before the future can be defined. Suppressing it or ignoring it will not work.

The December Party is not the only secular opposition. Several other Kazakh parties have declared themselves since the August coup attempt—among them a Republican Party, a Social Democratic Party, and a National Independence Party—but few are visible, in part because there is no opposition press to provide coverage. Indeed, after my interpreter and I left the December Party's yurt Kudaibergenov ran after us to give me his address. "Please send me anything you write," he said. "The foreign press is the only publicity we get." As we walked away, my interpreter quietly drew my attention to two hulking light-haired men in tracksuits who had been at the edge of the crowd since shortly after we arrived. They were distinctly Slavic, and did not appear to be among the politically curious. "K.G.B., definitely," my interpreter concluded.

The same American official who lauded Nazarbayev conceded that Kazakhstan was "not a hotbed of reformist thinking." In interviews with foreign and local reporters, Nazarbayev has talked about democracy in terms of an eventual "awakening." It is, at best, a go-slow approach, which he justifies as the result of the region's authoritarian past. Nazarbayev prefers to emphasize the economic reforms. Last fall, on a visit to Moscow, he reeled off "the statistics of success" to a reporter from the New York *Times:* Meat supplies had quadrupled since he opened the way for private ownership of cattle. Thirty per cent of Kazakhstan's agricultural produce was grown on the one per cent of land owned by independent farmers. And private housing was spreading across Kazakhstan. He also said that he had overcome public reluctance to privatization by helping to open a private café in each major Kazakh city. He told his interviewer, "I wanted them to see that though it was twenty per cent more expensive, they would soon be standing in line to get in, because the service was better, they were not being barked at, they were being invited to come back. It worked. In our conditions, we need examples."

When I sought out the model café in Alma-Ata, however, I found not a café but a fast-food joint; it was not privatized from former government ownership, I learned, but was a new Korean franchise, run by managers brought in from Seoul. Except for pink and black furniture, the place was empty; only two of a half-dozen outdoor tables had diners. Several girls behind the counter—attired in red-and-white striped shirts, black ties, red skirts, and little fast-food caps—talked idly among themselves. Above them was a neon menu with pictures of hamburgers, shakes, French fries, sandwiches, and something called ice flakes. My ever-hungry interpreter offered to sample the food. There were no French fries, though, "because the potatoes here are too small and low quality, so they won't go through the machine," one of the girls told us. There were no shakes, either, "because there's no ice." And, unlike the picture on the menu of a fat patty of beef with a thick slab of cheese and relishes, the hamburger was a thin slice of ham—anathema to Muslims—accented with a bit of shredded cabbage. The "burger" and a paper cup of warm cider cost an exorbitant thirteen rubles.

FOR more than a thousand years, an epic legend has been handed down through generations of Kyrgyz tribes. Its million lines tell of the famous warrior Manas, who conquered lands from Central Asia to Beijing, and whose descendants carried on the family name and established traditions still honored among the Kyrgyz. During centuries of khan rule in Central Asia, Kyrgyz poets could spin out the tale of Manas into weeks, even months, of narrative episodes of adventure, conquest, and romance. "The Iliad and the Odyssey are tiny in comparison," Abdukadyr Vorosbayev, a gray-haired Kyrgyz linguist and scholar wearing a blue-and-white baseball cap and a denim jacket, told me as we talked in a dimly lit bar in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. “There was a period in the nineteen-fifties, sixties, and seventies when the story was not allowed, but it stayed alive among the people. Children heard it from their parents. We still have poets who sing the Manas legend. It's timeless, and its universality touches all things important to the human spirit. It's about love, honor, courage, and the importance of family. It's about the basic idea of unification of the nation and the creation of a centralized state. Most of all, it's about Manas, who was a Kyrgyz. His story speaks to the tenacity of our people.”



For the Kyrgyz, Vorosbayev told me, the Manas saga was a bonding force among diverse nomadic clans, who roamed the mountains and valleys breeding horses, cattle, and yaks for more than a millennium. Until the late nineteenth century, the Kyrgyz had no permanent settlements, other than regularly used “places of hibernation” during the bitter winters. “Formally, the Kyrgyz belong to the Muslim family, but Islam as a religion doesn't have tight roots here,” Vorosbayev explained. “Religion is like culture, but it's not our spiritual world. Manas is more important in understanding Kyrgyz roots.”

The people of Kyrgyzstan—or Kirghizia, as the little republic on the Chinese border was known until it de-Russified its name last year—have always been distinct from the other Central Asian communities. Although they were part of old Turkestan, the Kyrgyz historically looked more to the Muslims of western China than to Turkic-speaking Asians. Vorosbayev told me, “I like to drive a Ford and wear a denim jacket, but most of all I don't want to lose my sense of identity.” His son is now at a Beijing university, and Vorosbayev helped organize an exchange program with Chinese from Xinjiang, the province that was once the eastern frontier of Turkestan. Islam is not yet a visible political force in Kyrgyzstan, though Muslim observances and mosques have significantly increased since the freedom-of-conscience law was enacted. And, compared with the flowering of energy and emotion in other Central Asian capitals, Bishkek, a place of neat wooded parks and wide boulevards, is a quiet, and even quaint, city. On a Sunday, the most exciting things to do were to visit the outdoor puppy market in the woods behind the bazaar and to chat with the cavalry cops patrolling the streets.

Kyrgyzstan is even more distinctive, however, for its “silk revolution,” which culminated after the abortive August coup in Moscow. The silk revolution never had the vibrancy of Czechoslovakia's velvet revolution, and was little noticed by the outside world, but it did set a precedent in Central Asia which the neighboring republics cannot ignore. It started in June, 1990, with ethnic riots in Osh, the republic's second-largest city, over the transfer of land between ethnic groups. At least two hundred and fifty Kyrgyz and Uzbeks were killed; some unofficial claims put the death toll over a thousand. Angry young demonstrators then besieged the headquarters of the Communist Party, which was blamed for mismanaging the crisis and causing needless bloodshed. Unlike the episodic unrest in other Asian republics, the furor did not die down. Hunger strikes and a campaign by a new Democratic Movement, which pulled together twenty-two opposition forces, eventually overwhelmed Communist hard-liners, and parliament was forced into holding Presidential elections. In October, 1990, the Communist Party leader lost the Presidency to a pro-democracy physicist named Askar Akayev, a dark horse summoned back from the Soviet parliament in Moscow to run for the post after no candidate won a majority in the Kyrgyz parliament's first vote.

During the silk revolution, Kyrgyzstan became the first Central Asian republic to break the pattern of orthodox Communist dictatorships that still held on to power. By the end of 1990, Kyrgyzstan had declared sovereignty and dropped both “Soviet” and “Socialist” from its title. Pushing slowly, to avoid a backlash from Communists in the Kyrgyz parliament, Akayev promised a multiparty system with a free-market economy. In a sign of the times, the name of the capital was changed from Frunze, after a Kyrgyz

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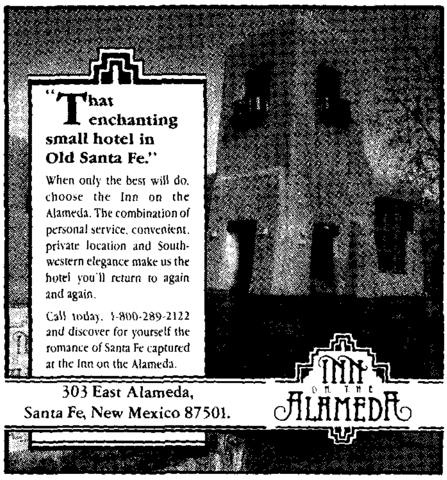

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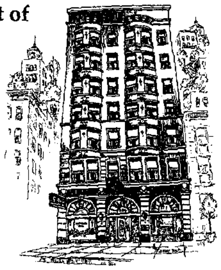

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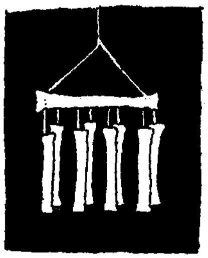
Russian who became a Soviet military hero, to the original Bishkek, after the churning staff that makes fermented mare's milk, the national drink.

Central Asia's oasis of democracy had a close call during the August coup attempt in Moscow. Kyrgyzstan was the only republic where hard-liners—including many of the Communists pushed aside in 1990—attempted a similar coup of their own. Local K.G.B. officials came to arrest Akayev while a commander of the Central Asian military district attempted to deploy tanks in the streets. To add insult to injury, the first news flashes about the coup's fizzling in Moscow reported that the plotters were trying to escape to Bishkek. "This false information went through Aeroflot channels. But the people at Aeroflot and others misunderstood the name," I was told by Feliks Kulov, who, as Kyrgyzstan's Interior Minister, had to deal with the internal threat as well as the possible arrival of the coup ringleaders from Moscow. "We learned later that the coup leaders actually intended to fly to Belbek, which is on the Crimea."

Kulov, an amiable and surprisingly young man, may be the only Interior Minister in any republic in Soviet history to have a popular following. He is widely viewed as a hero whose boldness single-handedly made the silk revolution possible. At the Democratic Movement's headquarters, Taabaldy Agemberdiyev, the movement's ideology chief, insisted that I meet Kulov, and then picked up the phone to arrange the meeting. "Thanks to Kulov, we have democracy here," Agemberdiyev told me. "During the hunger strike in 1990, when the Communists were still in power, he was the commandant, the top cop, of the city. But he didn't order troops to break it up. He used his authority to let people carry out the rally, despite a curfew. His actions made it possible for us to stand up to the Communists and then break their hold on power." If Kulov had ordered a crackdown, as his Uzbek counterparts have done repeatedly against Birlik meetings and protests in Tashkent, the reaction to the deaths in Osh would never have grown into the silk revolution. "Then, during the coup attempt, Kulov isolated K.G.B. troops here and had them encircled," Agemberdiyev continued. "He disobeyed the military commanders and closed down the airport, in case of an attack. He put his own life and career at risk during the coup." Yet throughout the two crises—the one that first brought Akayev to power and the one, ten months later, that insured the new President's political survival—Kulov was a member of the Communist Party's Central Committee. Not surprisingly, he quit the Party in August.


A. Malcolm

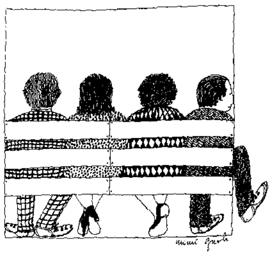
Kyrgyzstan's silk revolution reflects the uneven pace and erratic nature of political change in Central Asia. What has occurred over the past two years in little Kyrgyzstan is just the opposite of what has been happening in giant neighboring Kazakhstan. In Alma-Ata, the polls and popular movements indicate that political reform is supported at the bottom but resisted at the top. In Bishkek, the democratic transformation has been the product of a few men directing change from the top. Neither republic has witnessed the kind of emotional nationwide uprisings that swept Eastern Europe—and now have the potential to unseat Uzbekistan's Communist government. Despite the Central Asian republics' common heritage of religion and unity in old Turkestan, and despite their agreement on the need for regional unity in the future, each republic is going through the transition from centralized Soviet rule in its own way.

For Kulov, the decision to side with the pro-democracy forces against his own party grew out of conscience and instinct rather than ideology. "I didn't jump to the decision. It was a very difficult process," he told me as we sat around the conference table in his oak-panelled office. "I was a criminologist by profession, so I started accumulating my doubts a long time ago, when I was told there were no reasons for crime or problems in the Soviet Union. I remember being taught that the reasons for crime were unemployment, private property—all the things associated with capitalism. In the past, we were primitive in the way we handled crime. We captured and detained violators and didn't look for the roots. Later, I understood that crime is quite logical. There is almost always a reason for it." When, as police commandant, he had to decide what to do about the hunger strikers and the peaceful protesters at the parliament, he concluded that they were not engaged in criminal acts. I asked if he had understood at the time the potential repercussions of his decision. "Not really," he said, chuckling. "It was just instinct."

When we talked, Kulov was absorbed in what he called "departyization," or disentangling the republic's security system from Communist-apparatchik control. "We still need to sort out personnel. That does not necessarily mean firing people but, rather, creating a system to avoid involvements in political, or even tribal, fights," Kulov told me. "Several members of the Interior Ministry are still involved in local political intrigue. There are even some we call traitors."

"Should the average person feel safer now?" I asked.

"I wouldn't say that he should feel the same freedom as in Western Europe," Kulov replied. "We're trying to set up the most painless system, ways *not* to oppress people. For example, we won't keep dossiers anymore. And I wouldn't like to see the Interior Ministry and the [local] K.G.B. fused, as it was in earlier days. If anyone has that much power, it will be dangerous. For now, the K.G.B. is still technically capable of providing information, following people, and so on. I don't rule out the possibility that the chairman of the local K.G.B. has issued an order for my telephone to be tapped. But I would say that its powers are more limited. Our goal now is to work normally, to enforce laws regardless of parties and political figures. This is the most difficult task."

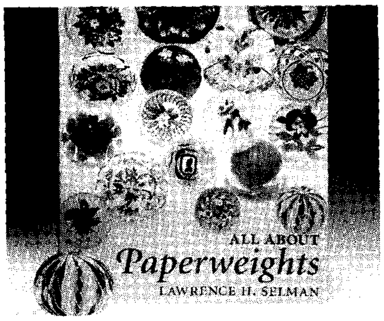


Helping democracy take root, however, may prove just as difficult. While Kyrgyzstan is the most democratic Central Asian republic in principle, its people are the least politicized. In October, Kyrgyzstan became the first newly independent republic to hold free national Presidential elections. The elections were held both to bring its more than four million people into the democratic process and to give the President a popular mandate. But, to Akayev's embarrassment, no one ran against him. "My wife took the three votes from my family and cast them," my Kyrgyz taxi-driver and guide said. "I assume she voted for Akayev, but I never asked." (Group voting, a common practice during Communist rule, was supposed to have been eliminated under the new democratic system.) At Bishkek's open-air bazaar, I randomly sampled the ideas of fruit and vegetable venders about their expectations of democracy. A young man named Akhtam, who was in his fifth season of selling pomegranates, did not want to talk until my taxi-driver told him, "It's O.K. for an interview. We're democrats now." Akhtam thought for a minute, and then said, "We expect peace to prevail so we can work and trade. We expect to live better." When I asked if he was living any better yet, he replied that he now got anywhere from eight to twelve rubles per kilo for his fruit, an increase over the previous year. To many in the poorer republics, democracy is anticipated more for the implicit right to prosperity than for the right to vote.

One of the key questions for the small and more obscure republics like Kyrgyzstan, however, is whether they can afford independent democracies over the long term. Kyrgyzstan has gold, mercury, and uranium, the last formerly used to develop both the Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal and its power stations. But minerals alone will not pay for Akayev's ambitious development projects, such as an international airport for flights to and from Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East, and a new industrial base to make the Kyrgyz more independent of Russia.

As prices rise for both local and Commonwealth goods in new free-market systems, Kyrgyzstan's young democracy faces the danger that its people will not be able to keep up, and that the absence of development could spawn disillusionment or political discontent. Yet the Democratic Movement did not seem in any hurry when I visited its offices. "A painless transformation to a market economy and developing an open relationship with other countries will take time," Agemberdiyev, the ideology chief, told me. "We're in a transition state. There's no way we can mix our ability with our desire."

I asked Agemberdiyev whether the republic's new government might need



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"Is there—was there—a Father Goose?"

greater public support, even just heightened interest, to insure tolerance during the transition.

"Democracy has, so far, done nothing for the man on the street or the fruit dealer in the bazaar," he responded. "There have been no changes yet. We haven't had time. The interest of the masses in change has grown, and I think people believe in democracy. But they don't always know what democracy really means. One of our tasks now is to create local democratic organizations. We have so many good slogans, but we must translate them into life." He said that by the next Presidential election, in 1996, there would be a candidate to oppose Akayev. Nevertheless, he admitted, the process of transforming democratic slogans into reality would be arduous. "If we reach that goal in fifty years, of reaching the bottom of society, we will be fortunate," he said. "Everything has to be changed—education, the economy, the role of the individual. This will take a generation or two. People are still at a tribal level of thinking."

THE poverty in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, hangs thick in the air. The street-sweepers water at night to clear away the dust, but by midday the city is again covered with pollution from cement, brick, and aluminum works, and clouds of carbon monoxide gust from the tail pipes of trucks, buses, and cars. As darkness descends, the city has an eerie feeling: few street lights or car headlights are turned on, and only sparse and dim building lights indicate direction. Tajikistan's per-capita income in 1989 was the lowest of all the Soviet republics'. Now, as the value of the ruble shrinks, income is probably only a fraction of what it was then—and it shows.

The smallest of the Central Asian republics and the most distant from Moscow, Tajikistan suffers from shortages that are even worse than Russia's. On the day I stopped in at Dushanbe's Central Department Store, the shelves offered an odd assortment of goods: brown pottery jugs, orange plastic stools, a few embroidered tablecloths of dull-gray fabric—whatever had been made, shipped, or left over recently, it seemed. One whole wall was empty except for a pile of forty-watt light bulbs; the only busy corner was a queue for crude rubber boots. At Dushanbe's bazaar, the supply of Central Asian produce was comparatively skimpy, and the prices were much higher than they were elsewhere in the region; dozens of people were lined up for bread. Throughout the capital, bottled drinking water was scarce, new housing was basically nonexistent, and taxis were so sparse that my interpreter and I had to commandeer a car belonging to an unemployed civil servant on the street for transport. Dushanbe—which lacks the energy of Tashkent, the cosmopolitan feel of Alma-Ata, and the sense of hope in Bishkek—can best be described as desperate.

After the failed August coup in Moscow, Tajikistan went through its own upheaval—and three Presidents in less than a month. Angered by the Tajik President's failure to condemn the coup, a new coalition—of nationalists, workers, and Islamists—took to the streets to protest. The President resigned. A new acting President then agreed to comply with Moscow's instructions to suspend Communist Party activities, and did nothing when jubilant crowds pulled down the towering bronze statue of Lenin across from the parliament. The second President was abruptly fired by the Communist-dominated parliament. On September 23rd, the Tajik legislators appointed Rakhman Nabiyev, a former Party boss during the Brezhnev era, as the third President. They also unbanned the Party, declared emergency rule, and posted troops around the city's remaining socialist symbols. Communist rule was officially back.

But the tit-for-tat turmoil between the old Party and the new democrats was not over. The opposition coalition mobilized a round-the-clock vigil at the newly renamed Liberty Square, across from the parliament; protesters pledged not to leave until democracy was restored. In one of those flukes of history, it then began to rain, unseasonably, in Dushanbe. The largest challenge ever to Communist rule in Tajikistan responded with unprecedented organization. Literally overnight, more than five dozen giant tents, provided by the central mosque, were set up. Tent City, as it was nicknamed, soon had supply lines of food and water. Barricades were erected to protect against a possible crackdown. Tajik veterans of the Afghan war, including many who were permanently maimed, set up a tent to vent their wrath at a system that had forced them to fight their brethren in Afghanistan. Hunger strikers set up another tent. And Islamists, many sporting newly fashionable beards, organized the five daily prayers and a host of speakers.

Each day, hundreds more Tajiks turned out to expand the human blockade around the parliament. Across the republic, state farms and factories threatened to strike. "We said if Nabiyev didn't resign, we'd replace the tents with a building," one of the Islamist protesters told me. "We had already prepared a hundred thousand bricks. Support was not just from the people. Even the Soviet military refused to intervene." The southernmost republic, once virtually cut off from foreign view, was suddenly besieged by the Soviet media and the international press. For ten days, tens of thousands of protesters sat it out. Unaccustomed to criticism and to the limelight, the parliament finally called an extraordinary session. "I cannot understand this!" Nabiyev shouted from the podium. "You voted for me! Yet in the course of seven days you change your mind?" On October 6th, he abruptly resigned. With Presidential elections scheduled in less than a month, the deputies decided not to name a fourth President. Tajikistan, which had also just declared independence, was left without a chief of state.

I arrived in Dushanbe as the election campaign was in full swing. Several Tajiks suggested that I meet Davlat Khudonazarov, chairman of the Soviet Association of Filmmakers and a member of the former Soviet parliament, because he personified the direction of change in Dushanbe. A widely acclaimed director and the closest thing the Tajiks have to a heartthrob, Khudonazarov recalled how deeply Communism had engulfed his life. "Until this year, the most dramatic moment in my life was in 1956, during the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party, when Stalin was disgraced," he told me. "I was a teen-ager, and it was a very hard moment for me. I believed in Stalin. I was brought up in the Tajik Mountains, the son of peasants, living the life of a shepherd. Up in those mountains, Stalin was a god. All of a sudden, he turned out to be bad."

This year, Khudonazarov switched sides. During the August coup, he was among the first national figures to rush to Russian Federation headquarters, known as the White House, to support Boris Yeltsin. After the coup was defeated, he quit the Communist Party. During the September crisis in Dushanbe, he was among the early speakers at Liberty Square urging on the demonstrators. After the crisis ended, he formally joined the opposition coalition. When we talked, he was running for the Presidency on the Democratic Party ticket against Nabiyev, his former colleague. His campaign slogan was "The future against the past."

"Decolonization will take ten or fifteen years," Khudonazarov told me. "We know for sure that the way will

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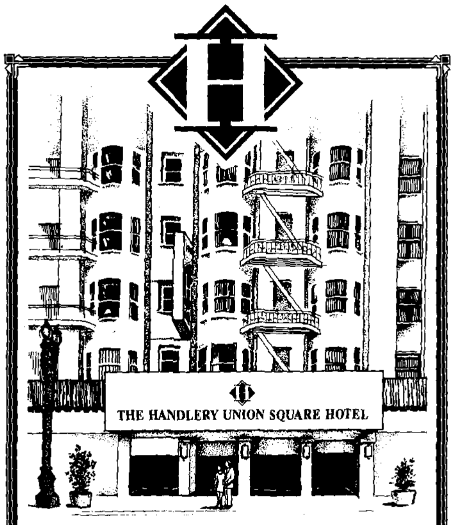

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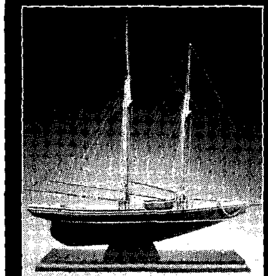

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be difficult. On the one hand we have the forces of renewal, and on the other the hanging on of the feudal and *nomenklatura* regime. The battle won't end with the election; they won't give up so easily. Tajikistan is also in terrible straits. We'll need something like the Marshall Plan to revive this republic and to eventually achieve real independence. If we gain economic freedom, then political freedom will follow." As in all the Central Asian republics, economics takes precedence over politics, whether the speaker is a new democrat, a reformed Communist, or an unrepentant hard-liner.

I asked Khudonazarov, who began working in film at the age of fourteen, what would happen if he were directing the Tajik political crisis as a movie.

"I would make a movie that had no bloodshed. Each republic has its own way to democracy, but the main task for each is to undo the years of tension that Communism has imposed on us and to organize an orderly transition, so the republics don't unravel under conflicting pressures. Our goal during the transition has to be civil peace. But that's difficult to come by, in real life or in the movies."

In the subsequent election, Khudonazarov, who later claimed widespread polling violations, including the distribution of pre-marked ballots, received thirty per cent of the vote, to Nabiyev's fifty-seven. Tajikistan became the first republic to witness a comeback by a Communist—not just once but twice.

One of the few opposition leaders who conceded the possibility of a Communist victory was, ironically, Davlat Usmon, the young deputy chairman of Tajikistan's Islamic Renaissance Party. I met Usmon as he and his colleagues were setting up the new I.R.P. headquarters in a downtown Dushanbe apartment. After years of being banned, the Islamists had finally been allowed to register as a legal party. "We had a deep and thorough conspiracy," Usmon said of the local I.R.P.'s years underground. "We met clandestinely throughout this period. Only a few of our members were picked up by the K.G.B. In 1982, we started an underground newspaper called *Islama Pravda*, or *Islamic Truth*. By 1989, we were issuing underground brochures and leaflets calling for the liquidation of the Communist and atheist regime and demanding a democratic state. We were active in many places, in many ways, and the authorities couldn't stop us." The I.R.P.'s coördination showed at Liberty Square. By everyone's account, its members were the most active and visible organizers at the protest.

I asked Usmon about the Tajik I.R.P.'s agenda, now that it had been legalized.

"Our main goal now is to prepare people for the creation of an Islamic state," he said. "Becoming legal is very advantageous. It allows us access to the masses to educate them. Probably even the Russian sector of the population, which once listened only to the negative propaganda about Islam, will change its attitude toward us. At present, the creation of any Islamic state in Tajikistan is impossible, because seventy years of atheism shows. The people are not ready yet. Also, there's a phrase in the Koran about not forcing people to believe in something. Our charter says we have to use all means possible except violence, so we're educating them gradually about Sharia." Creating an Islamic state, he predicted, could take as long as forty years. In the meantime, he had no fears of Communist rule. "If Nabiyev wins, he won't stay for long—that's sure. We'll work closely with the democratic bloc if there are any manifestations of oppression. We'll build more Tent Cities."

OF all the Central Asian republics, Tajikistan is the place where nationalist and religious forces have come the closest together—an unofficial alliance that could shape any third attempt to end Communist rule. One man who may be instrumental in a future transformation is Tajikistan's leading cleric, Qazi Hajji Akbar Turadzhonzoda. The Qazi—an Islamic term for "judge" which in some Muslim communities has come to mean "leader" and is used with reverence and affection—welcomed me warmly to his office suite, at the Hajji Yakub Mosque in Dushanbe. Dressed in a gray-and-white pin-striped jacket, and with a small, neat beard, the Qazi appeared anything but a fanatic in the mold of Iran's early revolutionary leaders. For a cleric of his rank, he is also a young man—just thirty-seven. On his desk were a regular phone, a cellular phone, and a fax machine; while we talked, all three were often going at the same time. He was just completing arrangements for a trip to Moscow the next day, he said. The government had invited him to participate in talks to end the Afghan civil war. Although he denied it, several Tajiks had told me that the Qazi's following extends well into neighboring Afghanistan.

"There is a great deal of unity here," he told me. "Our people have believed in Islam for thirteen hundred years. And Islam is ninety per cent of our culture and tradition, so you can't separate something religious from something national."

Did that mean he favored an Islamic state?

"Many people ask me that question," he said, smiling. "The answer is no, for a number of reasons. First, decades of atheistic practice have not gone unnoticed. It has had an impact on the minds of the people. Second, we're closely tied to the Slavic republics economically, and everyone knows how frightened the Slavs are of the idea of an Islamic state. Finally, we don't want the same thing to happen to the Islamic revolution that happened to the Communist revolution. We don't want to be isolated. We can't find a way out of our economic situation without foreign investment. And we know that the international community, too, wouldn't react well to the idea of an Islamic state." The outside world should also never expect a repetition of the Iranian revolution in Tajikistan, he added. "The models of the state are very different for the Shia and the Sunni. And Iran is Shia and we are Sunni."

Yet the Qazi did predict an Islamic role in the shaping of the region's transition to post-Soviet rule. "We do have plans to have close relations with Iran and Afghanistan," he said. "We are united by more than a thousand years of history. We Tajiks favor and encourage this trend. But that doesn't necessarily mean the creation of a new state." He also said that he was adamantly opposed to the re-creation of Turkestan. "There are certain Turkic-speaking fanatics—Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Azeris, and Turks—who propose this idea. But I don't think this way will get Tajiks anything good. We'll coöperate with them on economic issues, but we don't like the idea of Turkestan." He added that Tajikistan did not want to be liberated from Russian domination only to be dictated to by another group—an observation I had heard from many other Tajiks.

DURING the seven decades of Soviet rule, the already diverse pieces of old Turkestan took on separate identities. Each is now a distinctly individual member of the Commonwealth. In the short term, the re-creation of a Turkestan will, at best, be more of a brotherhood than a state, based more on economic exigencies than on united political goals. Indeed, the greatest threat within the region is the unwillingness or the inability—depending on the republic—to deal with political change. In the new Commonwealth, Central Asia is the last bastion of Communist or one-party rule. In all but Kyrgyzstan, true democratic movements are still tightly monitored or denied media exposure or outlawed altogether. Even the limited, and now outdated, "new thinking" of *perestroika* has yet to take hold. In the absence of meaningful openings, the frustration and alienation, the tension, and the nationalist rivalries are almost certain to deepen. In that atmosphere, the one strong and unifying factor—Islam, which provides a set of laws by which to rule a society as well as a set of spiritual beliefs—may present the only long-term alternative.

Under those circumstances, a new and more vibrant Islamic Turkestan might take shape. Even the Qazi said that Islam must do more than just offer definition or direction to an incipient nation; in Central Asia, the concept of a modern nation-state is considered to be Western, and alien to Islam's origins. "Once people are educated about Islam—and there are a lot of people, even believers, who don't really know about the religion—and we achieve a breakthrough in their minds, Islam will be a great factor in uniting people of the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Persian Gulf," the Qazi said. "I believe Islam will play a great role in establishing relations throughout the world. But it takes time."

—ROBIN WRIGHT

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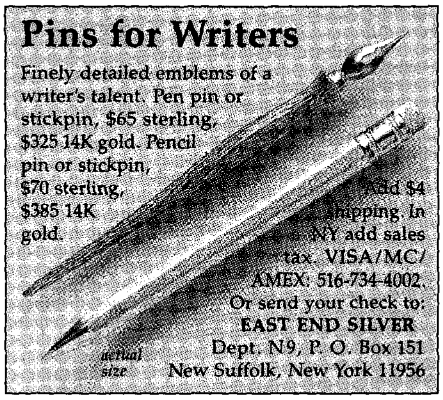
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MUSICAL EVENTS

Contrasts

THREE "Parsifal" productions I saw this season were very different. In January, I wrote about a colorful version that opened the Scala season. In February, the Houston Grand Opera mounted a revised staging of the much discussed production, by Robert Wilson, that opened in Hamburg a year ago. In March, the Met revived last season's production by Otto Schenk, with a stronger cast.

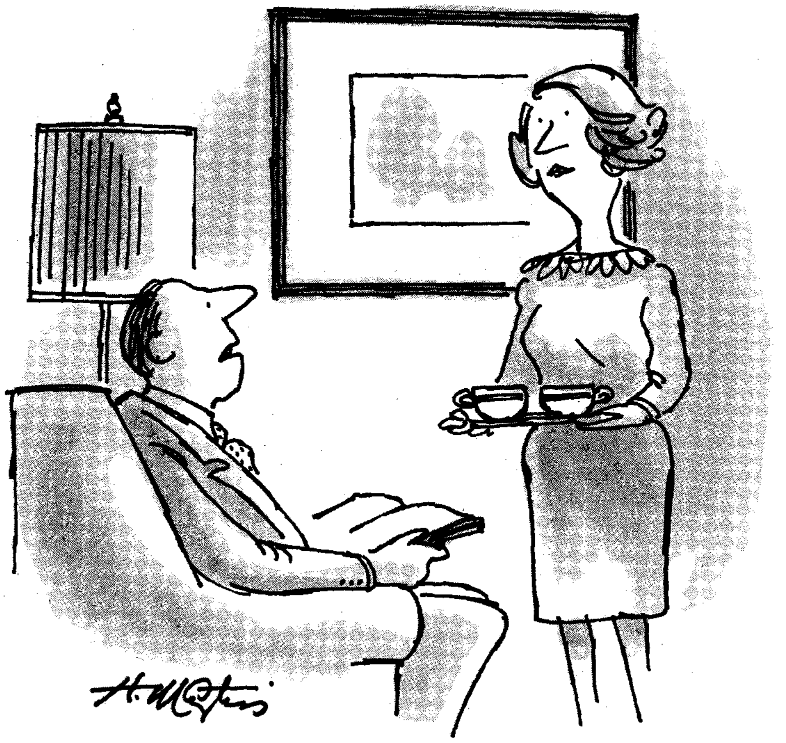
Wilson is an opera director in European demand. In 1984, he produced Charpentier's "Médée," in Lyons; in 1986, Gluck's "Alceste," in Stuttgart; in 1987, "Salome," at La Scala. Chicago saw his "Alceste" in 1990. Last year, there were three productions: the Hamburg "Parsifal," a "Magic Flute" at the Bastille, and a "Lohengrin" in Zurich. The "Parsifal"—Wilson's first engagement with a work not of his own creation—was in fact the earliest to be conceived: commissioned by Cassel eleven years ago, it was cancelled three months before the première; a decade later, Hamburg and Houston took it on.

In Wagner's setting for Act I, the background slopes down toward a deep-lying forest lake. Wilson sets the opera on the shores, the surface, and, for the flower-maidens scene, the bed of the lake. (A step toward his finished production was "Parzival: On the Other Side of the Lake," a theatre piece by Tankred Dorst, Ursula Ehler, and Wilson, which played in Hamburg in 1987, with Christopher Knowles, a regular Wilson performer, in the title role.) From a Houston program note one learned that "the artist spent countless hours listening to 'Parsifal' in his loft facing the Hudson River, during which time he would have seen the expanse of water outside his windows under changing conditions of light and weather—at sunrise, by moonlight, in the brilliance of noonday and in mist—a great reflective surface undergoing continual transformation, much like Wagner's music."

His "Parsifal" was a slow, solemn spectacle, without the irruptions of activity that animated "Deafman Glance" and "Einstein on the Beach." The singers held poses for what seemed like hours on end. (In Act III, Parsifal varied things with some jerky sign language.) During the prelude, at the Faith theme, Kundry gave birth to Parsifal (was Amfortas the father?): a boy rose from her recumbent form and made one of those slow, fancy crossings of the stage which are a Wilson mannerism. During much of the first scene, a giant, stage-spanning swan wing slowly descended. At the scene change, a pointed crystal rock, the Grail niched within it, moved across the waters, and a large, shining disk-with-a-hole, its inner struts visible, was lowered from the flies, on four stout ropes, to encircle it. The congregation remained offstage; on the disk, Amfortas, Gurnemanz, and an acolyte enacted the rite while Parsifal watched. In Act II, Klingsor's donjon emerged from the lake like the conning tower of a submarine. The flower maidens, virginal figures in ice blue, drifted amid starkly stylized bird-of-paradise blooms. (A single giant bloom served later for the Good Friday meadow.) Kundry and Parsifal did not kiss. In Hamburg, there had been no spear; in Houston, Klingsor launched a spear down the traditional carrier wire (which one had seen glinting in the light), and Parsifal detached it. In Act III, there was no anointing, no baptism. The disk reappeared, now blackened, to be reignited by Parsifal. This time, a chorus assembled. At the close, everyone went off; a brazier of bright flame rose through the hole in the disk, and the spear, newly attached to a wire, dangled overhead.

The lighting, by Wilson and Jennifer Tipton, was elaborate and often striking but was disturbed by a flicker of surtitles. The effect of the whole was pretentious, oversimplified, bleached, and self-indulgent in the application to Wagner of regular Wilson device. One watched a series of quirky, highly personal tableau-illustrations to the drama.

Wilson's cast in Hamburg was Siegfried Jerusalem, Kurt Moll, and Dunja Vejzovic—perhaps the world's leading Parsifal, Gurnemanz, and, after Waltraud Meier, Kundry. In Houston, Warren Ellsworth (whom I had heard in Milan) was to have sung Parsifal, but he fell ill and was replaced by John Keyes, a recent graduate of Chicago's Lyric Opera Center (and Scottish Opera's Siegmund this season). He has a firm, free tone, good words, and a nice breadth of phrase; he lacked the physical alertness required in a stand-still production. Miss Vejzovic, again the Kundry, has dramatic presence. Harry Peeters, a Dutch bass in the news, made his American début, as Gurnemanz, and sang with clarity and stamina. Members and former members of the Houston Opera Studio ably provided several knights, squires, and flower maidens. Christoph Eschenbach conducted the Houston Symphony, carefully and well.



"I'm about to fall silent for an hour or two—nothing personal."

The Met "Parsifal," designed by Günther Schneider-Siemssen, is a large, decorative show—a bit tinselly, sometimes a bit silly. But most of the right things happen. The revival was distinguished by the presence of Miss Meier, Mr. Jerusalem, and Mr. Moll. Only the last was wholly, consistently satisfying. Miss Meier's voice was unsettled on the first night—the middle register as moving as ever, the low notes weak, the high notes not always easy—and her heavily rolled "r"s (a cry of "Parrrsifal!" as she entered the garden) sounded odd. Mr. Jerusalem had some kittenish moments in Act I, and after an erotically charged Kundry-Parsifal encounter—very different from the pallid Houston confrontation—he lost concentration for a while. But all three gave sure, seasoned, serious performances. James Levine's conducting was slow but not stodgy, and the orchestral playing was uncommonly beautiful.

TWO Lully operas were playing in New York last month. One was "Atys"—the famous Arts Florissants production, on a return visit to the Brooklyn Academy. It's a dream of beauty. The show, which opened in Prato in 1986, has now been played more than seventy times—thirty-six times at the Opéra-Comique, eight times in Brooklyn—and its execution becomes ever finer. William Christie's *petit chœur*—nine continuo players—supported the song and colored each passing emotion ever more keenly and fancifully. Guillemette Laurens (Cybele), Monique Zanetti (a new Sangaride), Howard Crook (Atys), joined by one fresh, elegant, unforcing singer after another, bewitched the ear and stirred the heart. There were twenty-one soloists, forty instrumentalists (including five flutes, five oboes), and a chorus of thirty-three.

The other Lully opera was "Amadis," put on by the Measured Breaths Theatre Company, in the Gene Frankel Theatre. This was claimed as the first new staging "anywhere since 1771." (Loewenberg's annals record a London production in 1938, and Mattfeld's an American première, in Lowell House, Cambridge, in 1951.) "Amadis," we read, "savagely implicates any bloated superpower at the edge of its decline," becomes "a testimonial to a nation inactive on its own ground and over-active on the territories of others" and "a primer on how to romanticize your past in order to enrich your barren present . . . a rip-roaring romp through the Old West for the sake of our crumbling America." I admired the Measured Breaths staging last year of Monteverdi's "Madrigals of Love and War," in which the military metaphors of the text were given Gulf War representation. "Amadis" was coarser. Music and action were at odds. On the first night, Roberto Pace, conducting, plodded through the score at an electric harpsichord of horribly invadent tone while a string sextet dug into their strings at mezzo forte. The players were in a gallery above the singers, out of touch, not responding—as the Arts Florissants continuo responds—to every breath, every gesture. Much of the time, the singers bellowed—in a tiny theatre where a whisper would tell. They sang on the bar lines, and sang "eneMIES," "murmuRING," "liberTY." Robert Press, the founder of the company, was both director and translator.

THE St. Petersburg National Opera—better known as the Maly company, for which Chaliapin once sang, and which gave the premières of "The Nose," "Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk," and the first part of "War and Peace"—is at the State Theatre on a three-week visit, playing a season of Pushkin-based works: eight performances of "Boris Godunov," seven each of "The Queen of Spades" and "The Golden Cockerel." There are forty soloists, a chorus of sixty, an orchestra of seventy. The "Boris" I heard was a performance of merit, so well conducted, by Vladimir Ziva, and so confidently and naturally sung and played that one listened and listened, marvelling anew at the music. No big spectacle, just well-designed, simple scenery that changed without curtain-fall. No big-star performances, no great voices, just a large cast of decent, steady, reliable singers. "The Golden Cockerel" fared less well. I missed "The Queen of Spades."

LAST month, the Boston Lyric Opera gave the first performances of Michael Kaye's edition of "The Tales of Hoffmann," the opera that opens the Met next season. Offenbach died while the piece was in rehearsal, at the Opéra-Comique. Carvalho gave the première, in 1881, without the Venice act. For international use, Guiraud replaced

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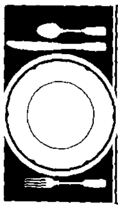

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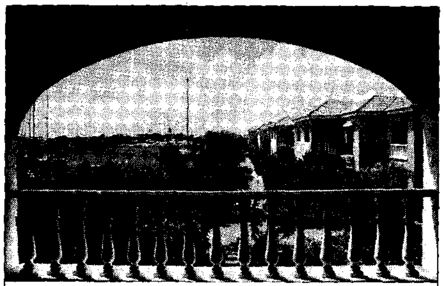
Offenbach's sequences of spoken dialogue, melodrama, and recitative with all-sung recitatives. In 1904 in Monte Carlo, Raoul Gunsbourg devised a new Venice act, adding the Diamond aria and the sextet—two hit numbers by André Bloch, based on Offenbach tunes. This became the standard version until, in the fifties, Arthur Hammond, Felsenstein, and others sought from the scanty sources then available to tidy and sharpen the piece. A cache of Offenbach autograph material turned up in 1976, and from it Fritz Oeser produced an edition that contains new "Hoffmann" music by Offenbach but also composition, speculation, orchestration, and transposition of his own. More music (now lodged in the Morgan Library) turned up in 1984; Kaye used it for an edition heard in Los Angeles in 1988. Further work on these sources and the discovery of an 1881 libretto submitted to the censors have enabled Kaye to refine and amplify his text.

I can't take "Hoffmann"—Offenbach's only *drame lyrique*—as seriously as many people do. Musically, it is less captivating than "La Belle Hélène," "Orphée aux Enfers," than almost any other Offenbach. Dramatically, it is a mess: discrete Hoffmann tales stirred into a confection about the Artist, his Muse-Companion, his Evil Genius, and the four Women—or fourfold aspects of Woman—who distract him from his Art. Is the opera—as several numbers suggest—a paean to strong drink as a source of true artistic inspiration? Is Lindorf, in his four incarnations, the villain? His music is sinister; he destroys Olympia and Antonia, causes death in Venice. Or is he the Muse's secret accomplice, ridding Hoffmann of feminine entanglements? Is he perhaps a dark side of Hoffmann himself, causing suffering that the Poet—like Mittenhofer in Henze's "Elegy for Young Lovers"—can then use for art? To ask the questions is to take the work too earnestly. It's a divertissement. But anyone who wants to stage "Hoffmann" should know all the surviving music that Offenbach composed for it, not just what Guiraud, Bloch, and Oeser decided to make of it. This Kaye provides. As options for those wedded to the old edition, he also includes the Guiraud recitatives and the Bloch additions. Since the composer did not bring his score to performance, there can be no definitive version: Kaye has alternative finales, both by Offenbach, to the fourth and the fifth acts, and alternative numbers elsewhere.

The revelation in Boston was the easy, natural flow of speech, melodrama, recitative, and full song. The Venice act began at last to make some sense; it included Hoffmann's passionate "Ô Dieu! de quelle ivresse," addressed now to Giulietta and not, as in the standard version, to the Muse. There was new music for the multiple heroine: a Giulietta chanson running up to high D; song for Stella in the second tavern scene; a moving strain for Olympia-Antonia-Giulietta-Stella during the apotheosis, as she relinquishes Hoffmann to the Muse but reminds him that she will play a part in the poems he is destined to write.

It was a long evening, with a protracted fifth act. Offenbach would have shaped and cut the work had he lived; future directors will no doubt cut and shape. The evening would have seemed less long had the Boston singers been lighter, verbally acute, less noisy. The company plays in the Emerson Theatre, a pleasing 1903 house by John Galen Howard, smaller than the Opéra-Comique. "Hoffmann" was sung in French and should have been sung in English, for, as the Boston *Globe* remarked, "it makes no sense for American singers to perform in a language most of them don't know for an audience most of which doesn't know it either." And one was battered. John Fowler, the hero, aimed at the high notes, which were ringing and excellent, and used a reinforced snarl for the rest. Patricia Racette, the heroine, was an amusing Olympia, and a touching Antonia at low volume; when she pumped up the decibels, she lost limpidity. Stephen West roared out the villain roles on approximate pitches. (All three could have learned from Les Arts Florissants. The Brooklyn Academy, a house in which the Met used to play, is bigger than the Emerson; there finespun tone—purely projected, focussed on the words—held the audience rapt.) Stephen Lord conducted; he kept things going but pushed through some phrases that needed to expand. James Robinson's staging included some silly ideas but was generally straightforward.

—Andrew Porter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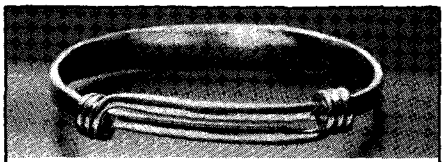
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THE THEATRE

Ibsen Done In

THE production of "The Master Builder" at the Belasco, under Tony Randall's direction, is an aimless shambles, which makes three in a row for his National Actors Theatre. Mr. Randall, of course, also functions (for want of a better verb) as the artistic director of the company. The show opens with an irrelevant scrim, painted with some sort of Norwegian village scene, which rolls away to reveal the offices of Halvard Solness, the master builder himself—with whom the playwright identified, according to many scholars. He is described as "strong and vigorous," though no longer young, but Earle Hyman, an experienced Ibsenite and a good actor, makes him far too venerable. And since Madeleine Potter plays Hilde Wangel as a pesky teen-ager, what we are left with is a rather disagreeable play about an elderly man and the kid he wants to bed. In the script, Hilde is twenty-two or twenty-three, and an assertive, openly sexual, and willful young woman, who insists that Solness assume the fake heroic character that she has forced upon him. Solness, of course, is anything but venerable; he is torn by fear and by guilt and, above all, by his sexual attraction to Hilde, which is just as strong as hers to him. No hero, indeed, but in the right hands he is as complex and towering a character as one can find in all of Ibsen. It is the misconception of Hilde, though, that, more than any other element, does the play in, and, since conceptions (and casting) are the director's business rather than the actors', I see no point in assigning much blame to Madeleine Potter in the part (or much praise, either). Before writing this lousy production off, I should say that Maryann Plunkett is good as the loving young bookkeeper in the builder's office, and that Lynn Redgrave, as poor Mrs. Solness, is perfect. (When she watches her husband climb to his death, by the way, she is a ringer for Edvard Munch's screamer.) Settings by David Jenkins, costumes by Patricia Zipprodt, and lighting by Richard Nelson, all admirable.

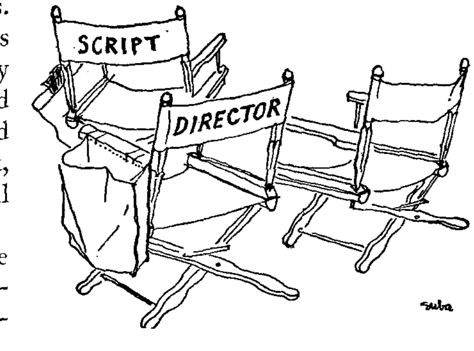
During the evening, partly to take my mind off the stage, I kept remembering the A.P.A., another classical-repertory company—but without any "National" in its title, or any other pomposity. The A.P.A.—the Association of Producing Artists, under the direction of Ellis Rabb—opened its first season here thirty years ago, at a little theatre called the Folksbiene. The company presented three plays—"The Seagull," "The School for Scandal," and George M. Cohan's "The Tavern"—and the actors included Rosemary Harris, George Grizzard, Nancy Marchand, Paul Sparer, Clayton Corzatte, and Will Geer. The productions, each of them, seemed extraordinary at the time; in retrospect they seem sublime. We are so often told that in America we have no National Theatre (we still don't, and why should we?), but, damn it, we had the A.P.A.

—EDITH OLIVER

Getting Closer

FOR my money, the best Neil Simon is the old Neil Simon, who wrote simple, unpretentious comedies about two divorced men, a honeymoon couple, two old geezers. When Mr. Simon is making things up, he writes funny lines and hits on funny truths; when he tries to turn his life into literature, he makes truth look like a Broadway show. Still, I'd rather be at one of the slightly contrived comedies about what Mr. Simon's life is like right now than at one of those gloomy Pulitzer Prize-winning dramas about his childhood or youth or coming of age as a writer, which are *all* contrivance.

"Jake's Women," which opened last week at the theatre that bears Mr. Simon's name, in a production directed by Gene Saks, with costumes and a set by Santo Loquasto, is half old Neil Simon and half new Neil Simon. On the upside, the play—about an aging writer trying to come to terms with the women in his life, past and present—is full of funny lines, and boasts a poignant scene or two; on the downside, it's full of phony dialogue and embarrassing childhood memories addressed to the audience. In fact, the protagonist of "Jake's Women" (Alan Alda), who, for purposes of plot, has a problem with intimacy, spends most of his time talking either to the audience or to a host of characters who are present only in his memory and imagination. There's his sister, Karen (Brenda Vaccaro); his analyst, Edith (Joyce Van Patten); his daughter, Molly, whom we see at twelve (Genia Michaela) and at twenty-one (Tracy Pollan); and his first wife, Julie (Kate Burton), who died in a car accident at thirty-five. The only flesh-and-blood characters sharing the stage with Jake are Maggie, his current wife (Helen Shaver), who, for purposes of plot, is on the verge of leaving him, and Sheila (Talia Balsam), an irritating young woman whom he dates during a six-month trial separation.



I'm a sucker for non-realistic staging; bring on a ghost or two, or cook up a scene between two apparitions, and I laugh, cry, spot metaphors, and think about going into analysis. Mr. Simon—who is, to the best of my knowledge, making his first attempt at non-realistic theatre with this play—insists on spelling out the metaphorical content of each scene, but at least the spotlight remains firmly on the women, rather than on his monosyllabically named hero. Mr. Alda is at his genial best, but it's really the actresses whom the play showcases—particularly Miss Van Patten, who comes close to stealing the show a couple of times, and Miss Burton, who for once has a role she can sink her teeth into. Even Mr. Saks is in good form, and doesn't, as he has in the past, merely elicit performances that re-emphasize what the play's situation or lines have already made clear.

The play has too many endings, and it contains too many knowing observations about the craft of writing, but, for all its predictability, you find yourself wanting to see *how* Mr. Simon will get us to a particular preordained point. There's honesty in the play's closing image: as the lights fade to black, Jake hasn't quite made the leap his author wants him to make, but he's heading in the right direction.

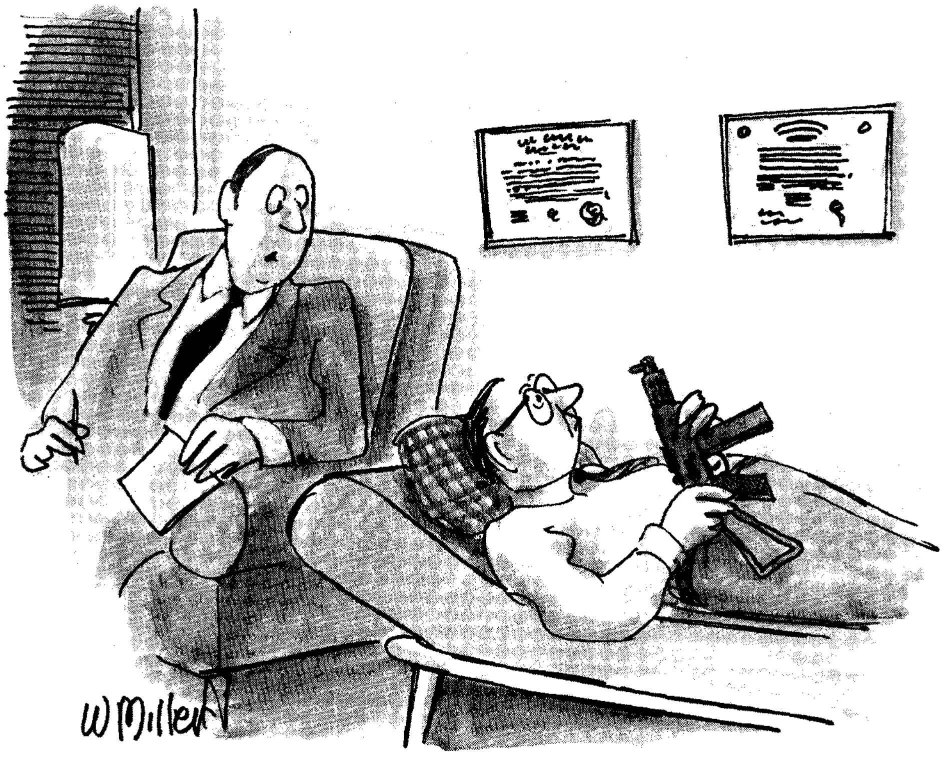
—MIMI KRAMER

THE CURRENT CINEMA

Boys' Games

RON SHELTON'S "White Men Can't Jump" is a resourceful, sneaky-fast comedy about playground basketball. Like his sublimely funny "Bull Durham" (1988), whose background is minor-league baseball, "White Men" focusses on grown men trying to make a living at a boys' game, and it does full justice to the sweet absurdity of that enterprise. Most sports movies stink, because they aren't really about sports. Their only true subject is winning, and they're generally designed to build up to a Big Game in which the underdogs squeeze out a narrow victory over their mean, arrogant, and more talented opponents. In these movies, it's always Shea Stadium in 1969, and the message always appears in giant, scoreboard-size letters: "You gotta believe." Probably the only audiences that respond wholeheartedly to these pictures are small children (who like fairy tales) and businessmen (who like motivational lectures). Shelton's approach is bracingly different. He doesn't worry much about big games, and when his characters are engrossed in play he barely bothers to keep score. The heroes of "White Men," Sidney (Wesley Snipes) and Billy (Woody Harrelson), don't play basketball for glory. They play because they're good at it: their physical skills are the source of intense pleasure, a kind of feeling that nothing else can give them. They do play for money, but there are easier ways to make a buck than venturing into tough, hostile inner-city neighborhoods and trying to hustle the kings of the local courts. Sidney and Billy are addicted to the game—hooked on the deep contentment of making a jumper over an outstretched hand, or hitting a teammate with a perfect pass as he breaks free along the baseline, or spinning past a defender and taking it to the hoop.

In Shelton's movies, playing ball doesn't function as a character-builder; it's pure hedonism. Shelton knows (maybe because he was an athlete himself, a baseball player whose career ended at the top level of the minors) that the most extraordinary joy can come from talents that are, in every practical sense, useless. Professional athletes, the lucky few, can justify what they do: they have salaries and benefits, like normal people. Sidney and Billy and the other playground hot shots we see in "White Men" have a harder time rationalizing their ball-playing, to themselves and to the women in their lives. Sidney, who has a wife, Rhonda (Tyra Ferrell), and a child, tells his family that he's "going to work" when he steps on the court; Billy, who has a cocky, commanding presence as a player, turns nervous and furtive when he comes home to his live-in girlfriend, Gloria (Rosie Perez). In domestic contests, the men are overmatched: the women play tight, in-your-shorts defense, and the guys don't have the verbal moves to get around them. When their mates challenge them to account for themselves, Sidney and Billy lose their cool, and for a very good reason. They—and the women, and everyone in the audience—know that the primary object of their basketball hustling is the childlike, irresponsible delight it gives them. The money they win buys them time: it keeps the heat off at home, and enables them to live the playground life for a little longer.



"I'm sure it increases your sense of security, Mr. Bromer, but I do wish you'd go back to your little blanket."

The movie begins with Billy hustling Sidney on an outdoor court at Venice Beach, in Los Angeles. Sidney is the reigning star there, but the challenger catches him off guard. Billy works a diabolical con: he blinds his opponents with the color of his skin. Because he's a white guy—and a goofy-looking, miserably dressed one, at that—everyone assumes he can't play the speedy, shake-and-bake style of black playground ball. And, in fact, he doesn't run or jump as well as players like Sidney, but he's a superb passer and a deadly jump shooter, and he starts every contest with a huge psychological edge: by the time the opponent realizes that he isn't a pushover, most of the damage is done. Although Sidney gets beaten—and it's humiliating to lose on your own court to a white dufus in baggy shorts and a turned-around cap—he's smart enough to smell the possibility of a fantastic scam. He and Billy begin to roam the courts of Los Angeles together, but always travelling separately. Arriving in a new neighborhood, Sidney gets into a game and starts taunting the local players with boasts about his prowess. Before long, everyone on the court is shouting at everyone else, and Sidney, apparently deranged by anger and bravado, issues the challenge: he'll stake everything he has on a game of two-on-two, and the opponents can pick his teammate. They choose the white guy every time. It's great fun watching the deception develop. We get the intellectual satisfaction of witnessing an impeccably executed con, and then we get some fine, fierce basketball action. Roping the suckers into the bet is, after all, only half the battle: Sidney and Billy still have to win the game.

Shelton, working with the cinematographer Russell Boyd and the editor Paul Seydor, has put together basketball sequences that capture the free-flowing rhythms of the playground game. Under the hot California sun, players fake and shuffle and jockey for position to the steady beat of the ball hitting the asphalt, and then, suddenly, the decisive move is made and someone is streaking toward the hoop and starting to rise. What's so breathtaking about playground ball is the split-second creativity it demands. Shelton has a sure feel for the game's exhilarating unpredictability; the thrill of basketball played at this level is its capacity for surprise, for out-of-nowhere feats of inspiration. When Sidney and Billy are really cooking on the court, even they don't know what they're going to come up with next, and every idea, no matter how wild, turns into effective action—a score—with magical immediacy. The two-on-two contests in "White Men Can't Jump" give us the delicious feeling a basketball player gets when he's *almost* out of control: flying but lucid. It's no wonder that Sidney and Billy are hooked on this stuff.

The movie takes its style from its subject: it's focussed but relaxed, ready to move in any direction. Shelton's script has a slightly raggedy, one-thing-after-another structure, which allows him to try out all sorts of comic notions. There's a hilarious subplot about Gloria's attempts to become a contestant on "Jeopardy!" She declares, "It is my destiny that I triumph magnificently on that show," and to that end she spends her days packing her brain with trivia. Her mnemonic ability is a nice match for Billy's basketball skills: like her boyfriend, she has a freakish and not obviously lucrative talent that she feels (or hopes) will somehow pay off in the end. The "Jeopardy!" motif is something that Shelton seems to have plucked out of thin air, but it manages, unobtrusively, to fit into the movie's larger concerns: it's a flashy move that also accom-

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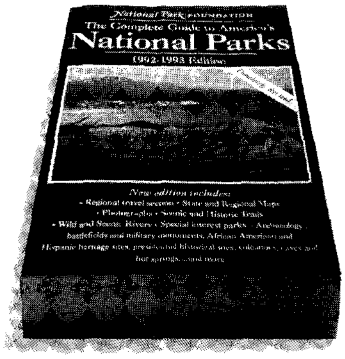

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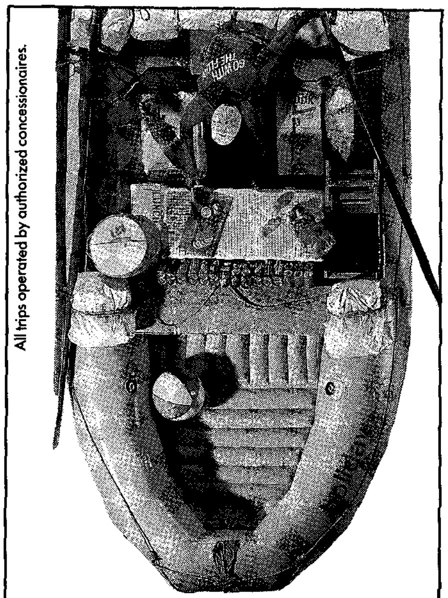
plishes something. Not everything in the movie has that sort of effortless-seeming rightness. There's an occasional lull in the narrative momentum, and the important character of Sidney's wife feels underimagined. The picture would be stronger if Ferrell had a few more scenes and if Perez (who's often sensationally funny here) were a bit less shrill; the women are meant to be wiser and more honest than the men, but sometimes they just seem like nags.

The lapses are easy to forgive, though, because the movie has a generous spirit and a deep appreciation of play, and it moves with a distinctive funky grace: it takes things as they come and trusts itself to handle them. Although there's a lot of aggressive energy in the action on the screen, the picture itself never feels overbearing. Shelton doesn't get in the audience's face, even in a showstopper sequence like that of the tournament in which Sidney and Billy compete against two-man teams from all over the region. Billy, whose life has not been going well, turns into a genius of trash-talking: he heaps baroquely inventive verbal abuse on every player he faces. The beauty of the scene is that Billy's put-down lines aren't just crowd-pleasing zingers: they tumble out in a great vulgar rush, one after another—an eruption of hostility (and, of course, gamesmanship) that gets funnier as it gets more extreme. Throughout the picture, Shelton keeps his eye on the fine points of playground culture and lets the story's meanings—and its humor—emerge from the details. Refreshingly, he doesn't bear down too hard on the racial significance of the heroes' partnership. He treats the differences between blacks and whites mostly in basketball terms, as matters of style. Racial stereotypes, like the one embodied in the title, function as rules that are waiting to be broken, occasions for comic anomalies. Billy, for instance, holds the common view that black players care more about looking good on the court than about winning, while white players know how to win. Billy's game does rely on strategy and guile; Sidney's moves are more spectacular. The joke, which dawns on us slowly in the course of the movie, is that Sidney is an intelligent player, too, and his smarts, unlike Billy's, extend to the decisions he makes off the court. Snipes and Harrelson do a superb job of bringing out the witty contrasts of the script. The timing of their exchanges is as miraculously exact as their teamwork on the court: they pass lines back and forth as if they had been doing this sort of thing forever. Harrelson's Billy shambles through the picture like a dazed kid, but he turns steely and determined when he's playing ball; this is a rich, subtle, and delicately funny performance. And Snipes is just amazing. He's both loose and explosive: everything he does seems to leap right off the screen.

"White Men Can't Jump" is a terrifically original mixture of patience and flash. Shelton orchestrates the action like a veteran point guard. He's a wily pro with a streak of playground showmanship, and that's an ideal style for movies as well as for basketball. This is a sane, savvy picture that's also unpredictable enough to produce more than a few moments of comic euphoria. American studio movies have been so plodding and unimaginative in the past few years that an entertaining picture like "White Men Can't Jump" seems as unlikely as the last play we see Sidney and Billy make—an over-the-shoulder alley-oop pass leading to a clean dunk. You gape, and ask yourself, "Where did *that* come from?" And then you start to grin.

"Basic Instinct," directed by Paul Verhoeven from a screenplay by Joe Eszterhas, is a chilling reminder of how Hollywood usually plays the big-budget-movie game. It's a vicious, grindingly manipulative urban murder mystery that uses a thick atmosphere of S & M kinkiness to distract the audience from the story's thinness and inanity. In the opening scene, a blond woman stabs a man repeatedly with an ice pick while they're having sex. Things get uglier from there. The detective investigating the crime, Nick Curran (Michael Douglas, at his most monotonously intense), falls in love with the prime suspect, a rich, beautiful bisexual novelist named Catherine Tramell (Sharon Stone). What attracts him to her? Is he actually turned on by the risk of getting ice-picked when he goes to bed with her? (He is, we learn, one of those cops with a "dark side": he has a history of drug and alcohol abuse and a reputation for messing up his cases by shooting innocent bystanders.) Is Catherine, in fact, a mirror image of Nick's own twisted, violent nature?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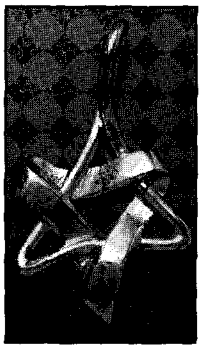
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These are not very interesting questions. Our basic instinct as we watch Michael Douglas's strenuous grimaces of sexual transport is to flee the theatre. There's some perverse cleverness early in the picture, when Catherine disconcerts a whole roomful of male cops with her haughty, brazen sexuality: she's a cool, merciless tease who relishes her power over men, and Stone plays the scene with splendid comic malice. But the movie soon degenerates into ridiculous heavy-breathing solemnity, pausing occasionally for a high-speed chase or the introduction of a red herring. A few more suspects bob up—every woman the hero comes across could be a killer—but the mystery is so ineptly constructed that it's not much fun trying to work out the solution. We sense throughout that the filmmakers don't have any respect for the genre—that they're too jaded to care about anything but giving us enough voyeuristic jolts to keep us awake. In the last shot, they tell us who the killer is and leave everything else unexplained; they don't worry about tying up the story's loose ends, and they assume, cynically, that we'll be satisfied with a quickie solution. In a sense, they're right: with a movie like this, bringing it to an end—any end—is the greatest gift the filmmakers can give the audience. When it's all over, we realize that the only suspense that "Basic Instinct" has produced effectively is a weird kind of ideological suspense. Will the movie take its smarmy misogyny all the way, or will it pull back in the end? It goes all the way. —TERRENCE RAFFERTY

Smog

WOODY ALLEN sets his latest art-cum-comedy thing, "Shadows and Fog," in a nameless country that resembles the Germany of movies by Pabst, Murnau, and Fritz Lang. The few isolated laughs recall the burlesque spirit of Allen's early writing, such as "Selections from the Allen Notebooks" (from "Without Feathers"), in which he wrote, "I kept imagining I saw shadowy forms, and at 3 A.M. the underwear I had draped over a chair resembled the Kaiser on roller skates." But here Allen isn't on a roll. As an irritating nebbish named Kleinman, who gets caught up in a search for a mad killer, he anchors a distinctly unfeathery farrago of generic art-house themes and personalities. Such familiar figures as a messed-up clown (John Malkovich) and a hyperrational man of science (Donald Pleasence) either suffer the torments of love or try to find the root of evil. Carlo Di Palma's ludicrously deliberate and grainy black-and-white cinematography obscures the first-rate, ill-used cast (there are glimpses of Lily Tomlin, Jodie Foster, Kathy Bates, Fred Gwynne, Madonna, David Ogden Stiers, and many others, including a barely discernible Kate Nelligan), though Mia Farrow, as a circus sword swallower, is so splendorously creamy that she gleams through the murk. John Cusack brings an affecting, lightly parodistic ardor to the role of a romantic, prematurely world-weary student—the kind of character who could have thought up this cockeyed pessimist of a movie. Julie Kavner plays a woman who has never forgiven Kleinman for jilting her at the altar; she wins the heartiest audience response, possibly because she keeps telling him to buzz off and die.

IN the movie version of "Noises Off," Michael Frayn's sparkling stage hit gets framed, in more ways than one. The director, Peter Bogdanovich, and the screenwriter, Marty Kaplan, slap on a flashback structure, and also a narration spoken by the director of Frayn's farce-within-a-farce (Michael Caine). The filmmakers transfer the play's rickety touring troupe from England to America, and view a catastrophic road trip as a prelude to success on Broadway. In effect, they transform Frayn's black slapstick about entropy into a "let's put on a show" fantasy about an improbable triumph. Most of the time, Bogdanovich simply shoots Frayn's gleefully proscenium-bound play without making it work for the movies. He pushes in close and cuts away to reaction shots, often of Caine smiling or scowling. The result is roughly equivalent to a "pan and scan" TV version of a wide-screen spectacle. The camera cues the gags: it draws your eyes to comic props (plates of sardines, whiskey bottles, a potted cactus), killing any surprises. Bogdanovich has cast actors you want to see—notably Carol Burnett, Denholm Elliott, Marilu Henner, Julie Hagerty, and Christopher Reeve—in a production that grows increasingly impossible to watch. —MICHAEL SRAGOW

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–*George Bernard Shaw*

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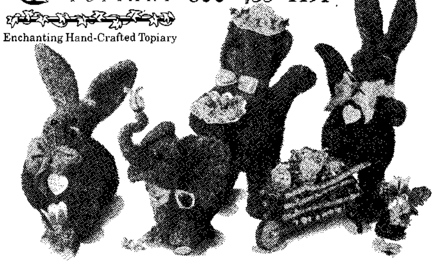

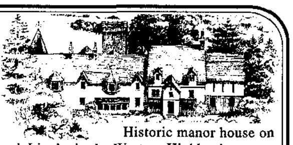

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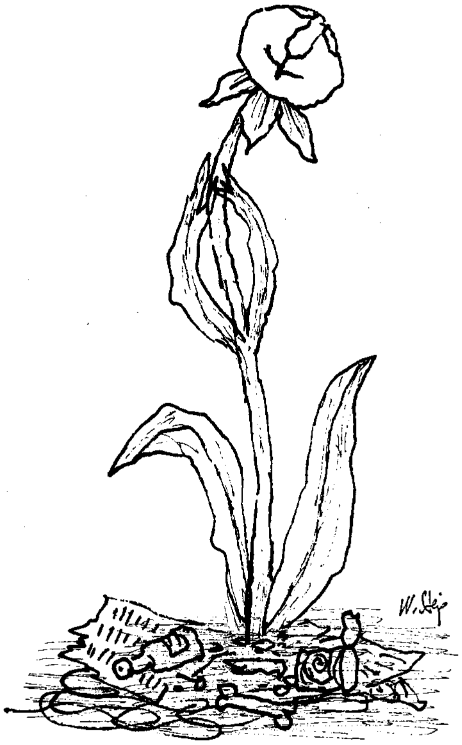
AROUND CITY HALL

Seesaw

IN the days just before former California Governor Jerry Brown won the Democratic Presidential primary in Connecticut, on March 24th, the primary in this state, on April 7th, promised to be almost an irrelevance—a walk-through for Arkansas's Governor Bill Clinton, who saw Brown as a minor irritant while Clinton was being treated as the front-runner by most politicians and, particularly, by the political press. With the acceptance in so many quarters that the primary races were as good as over, Clinton would be able to save the energy, money, and other resources he might otherwise have spent on a close primary in New York for the big push in the general election. If residents of this city, many of whom treat politics as major entertainment, hadn't been able to remind themselves that the Democratic National Convention would be held here in July, they would have felt that they had been consigned to the upper reaches of the balcony during this Presidential-election season—seat assignments to which they do not take kindly.

The July session will mark the fifth time the Democrats have met here; the Republicans have never given the city a try. In 1868, the Convention was held in Tammany Hall, on Fourteenth Street; it nominated the former New York Governor Horatio Seymour, who lost that November. In 1924, when the setting was the old, *old* Madison Square Garden, which was actually on Madison Square, the nominee was John W. Davis, who lost. The Democrats didn't venture back until 1976, when, meeting in the present Garden, at Seventh Avenue and Thirty-third Street, they chose Jimmy Carter, who won. When they nominated Carter here four years later, the result was different. Still, at their convention this summer, again in the Garden, the Democrats will dwell on the site's lucky associations for the Party. And, whatever the outcome in November, it was clear after the Connecticut upset that New York's primary would now be a very big deal indeed. Calling New York "a major battleground," Brown said, "This is the place where we start turning the Party around and the country around."

Last summer, Clinton said that his party was taking a terrible risk in holding its Convention here, since doing so would encourage voters to associate the Democrats with all the city's dismal problems and would also give the appearance of the Democrats' choosing to go to a place "up there"—that is, to New York—"where there's a whole bunch of folks that don't vote for them anyway and pander to them." Clinton's suggestion that New Yorkers don't vote the Democratic line indicated that he might have been spending too much time in Little Rock: the last Republican Presidential nominee to carry New York City was Calvin Coolidge, in 1924. And in 1988 Michael Dukakis, with Governor Mario Cuomo in charge of his campaign, took this state against Bush. Cuomo's response to Clinton—that he was "a dead man" politically if he was attacking New York City—suggested that the Governor might have been spending too much time in Albany: running against this city is one of the most popular and, often, most successful political strategies not only among Republican politicians but also among Democrats who live someplace else. However, Cuomo then seemed to concede points to Clinton when he went on to say that the Republicans this year would "try to picture the most distressing parts of New York by focussing on the city" and then try to create a Willie Horton "type of association." Early last year, the columnist George Will, explaining why Cuomo's election as President was an impossibility, pointed out his close relationship to this city—he was born and raised in Queens—and declared, "New York City is a Willie Horton: scary." (Hillary Clinton made a different association late in January, when she described Gennifer Flowers, who claimed to have been her husband's longtime girlfriend, as "the daughter of Willie Horton.") Last fall, Vice-President Dan Quayle said that Bush would be running against "the nightmare of New York City." On March 3rd, the *Times* commented in an editorial (a little behind the curve, perhaps) that "to judge by current evidence, the new Willie Horton is New York City." In the minds of many Republicans, running against New York City promises to be even more fun than running against Boston was in 1988, and to many of them it would have been the most fun of all if their opponent was that prominent politician from Willie Hortonville, Mario Cuomo, but he spoiled it all by announcing on December 20th that he would not be a candidate. Just because the Governor is an official noncombatant in the campaign, however, doesn't mean that he won't be mixing into it. Late last month, when he was asked about the electability of various candidates, he said, "Anybody's electable who's decent and intelligent and isn't carrying a dead body in a sack on his shoulder"—thus slyly encouraging a closer look at the baggage of those he would have been contending against if he hadn't pulled out of the race.



The Holy One

A winning candidate who chose New York for a launching site in relatively recent years was a Republican, although the state is predominantly Democratic and the city heavily so. Last month, former United States Attorney Rudolph Giuliani, whose second mayoral campaign, for the 1993 election, is already unofficially under way (he was defeated in 1989 by David Dinkins), reminded a G.O.P. gathering, ruefully, that the Republican proportion of the registered electorate in the city now stands at thirteen per cent. In the 1980 campaign, Ronald Reagan announced his Presidential bid at the New York Hilton. A top strategist under John Sears, Reagan's campaign director at the time, explained, "We're calling the announcement 'the New York idea' because this has been a desolate area for Reagan until now." The "New York idea" theme didn't survive the early days of the campaign, but Reagan carried the state in 1980 and also in 1984. At the Manhattan Republicans' annual Lincoln Day dinner in 1989, the year of the last municipal election, Lee Atwater, then the head of the Republican National Committee, unveiled a New York idea of his own, saying, "It's time for the Party to take campaigns right to the inner cities. . . . There's no better place to start than New York City." A Republican invasion of the cities and a G.O.P. victory in the mayoral race here, he said, would "turn this country spinning." However, there was no subsequent Republican invasion of the inner cities—though there was plenty of spin. (Before New York was designated a major battleground in this year's Presidential race, the cities hadn't got much attention from Democrats on the national scene, either—except when Jesse Jackson stopped by.) In 1989, Giuliani lost to David Dinkins by only forty-seven thousand votes out of nearly two million cast—the narrowest winning margin in a mayoral race since the turn of the century. On March 22nd, a *Newsday* poll showed that Giuliani could now defeat Dinkins by fifty-three per cent to thirty-eight per cent. The poll gave Giuliani seventy-five per cent of the white vote and Dinkins, who is black, eighty-three per cent of the black vote: that is the way it is in this city, for all the talk of Dinkins' "gorgeous mosaic" and Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. If these figures should hold up, and Giuliani were to become the first New York mayor to be elected on the Republican ticket since John Lindsay, in 1965, the Republicans might see this city as a less hopelessly alien place.

The prospect that this year's Democratic Presidential primary here—Bush has no opposition in the Republican contest—might be almost a non-event had been particularly hard for the locals to adjust to, since the last one, in 1988, had left significant marks on both national and local politics. The Democratic candidates in April, 1988, were Governor Dukakis, Tennessee Senator Albert Gore, and Jesse Jackson. Gore, who was little known here, eventually laid out about a million dollars to remedy this disadvantage. He spent most of it to hire David Garth, the celebrated political guru who had run the campaigns of Edward Koch, then the city's mayor. Garth persuaded Koch to endorse Gore five days before the primary. During those five days, the Mayor attacked Jackson savagely, describing him as a liar and someone whose election as President would cause America to become bankrupt and militarily defenseless in a few weeks. Far from making friends for Gore, the attacks so offended local Democrats that he ended up with ten per cent of the votes and, two days after Primary Night, pulled out of the race. Jackson came within fourteen percentage points of defeating Dukakis and carried Koch's city. Jackson's campaign directors in the state were Stanley Hill, the head of District Council 37, which is the largest local municipal-employees union, and Dinkins. The Koch performance helped reinforce the view among many New Yorkers, both black and white, that it was time to get him out of City Hall. Hill and Barry Feinstein, the head of Teamsters Local 237, who are joint leaders of the Municipal Labor Coalition, worked hard to bring this about, helping Dinkins to defeat Koch in the 1989 mayoral primary and to be elected that November as the city's first African-American mayor.

On the present political scene, national and local, the two union leaders, though they remain friends, aren't such close partners. In January, Hill endorsed Clinton, and last month Feinstein came out for Brown. And, in a move in which Hill said later he had played no part, Feinstein last month sent out a letter to three hundred and fifty local labor leaders proposing that they take a serious look at whether they should endorse Dinkins for reëlection. What had caused Feinstein to start thinking along these lines, he explained, was a column, in the form of an open letter to the Mayor, on

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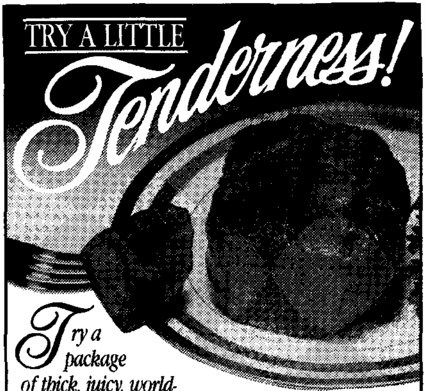

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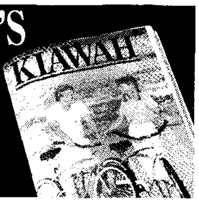

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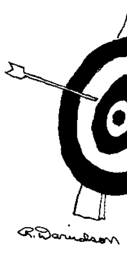
the Op-Ed page of the *Times*, on March 8th. Written by Anna Quindlen, a former City Hall reporter and now a columnist for the paper, it began by quoting Sydney Carton's final words in "A Tale of Two Cities": "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done . . ." She went on to describe the Dinkins administration's style of government as ricocheting from one crisis to another. Referring to Laura Blackburne, his Housing Authority chairman and close friend, who resigned by request on February 22nd, she wrote, "Her pink leather couch and Marie Antoinette expense accounts have not made those pictures of you in the tuxedo any more palatable, especially as the poor get poorer and the middle class feels more pinched." If he continued to seek reëlection, she wrote, it would keep worthy candidates from entering the next mayoral race, and the city would be stuck with a choice between Giuliani ("hardly a thrilling alternative") and the President of the City Council, Andrew Stein ("who now holds a meaningless job, which is fitting"). Urging the Mayor to "pack it in," the column concluded, "It would be a far, far better thing than you have done in some time."

THE 1990 census put the city's population at seven million three hundred thousand, which is about two hundred and fifty thousand greater than the total for 1980. Despite stories of its decline and imminent fall, New York is one of the few large cities outside the Sun Belt that gained residents in the eighties. Yet in early 1989 it was pointed out, in an informal study, that anyone who relied on the local tabloids might conclude that there were only eight or nine New Yorkers, from a variety of fields, who were newsworthy enough so that they regularly, week after week, made the huge front-page tabloid headlines known as "the wood"—a term that harks back to the days when wood blocks were used to print them, because they were too large for the metal type on hand. The study established that the perennial local headliners were Donald Trump, John Gotti, George Steinbrenner, Ivan Boesky, Mike Tyson, the Reverend Al Sharpton, John Cardinal O'Connor, and the mayor of the city, to whom it would seem fair to add the governor of the state. Oddly, in a town that many outlanders consider to be full of overaggressive females, the perennial headliners tended not to include women. Those who did qualify, according to the study, were women who were due to go on trial in a court of law: Leona Helmsley and Imelda Marcos were to be tried in the same federal courthouse, two blocks north of City Hall—Leona Helmsley for tax fraud involving the misappropriation of corporate funds for her private benefit, and Imelda Marcos, for using Philippine government funds to buy millions of dollars' worth of New York real estate for her own enrichment. Both indictments had been brought by Giuliani before he resigned as United States Attorney to make his first race for mayor. For a city that often seems to be obsessed with politics, the big headliners also included relatively few politicians, unless the fact counts that some consider the Cardinal—along with the Mayor and the Governor—to be one of the city's three most powerful politicians.

The last several years have required painful readjustments here, as everywhere. Greed is no longer good, for instance, as it was once proclaimed to be by Ivan Boesky, who is no longer a perennial headliner, having, like many former Wall Street superstars, been required to exchange the high-rolling life for jail time and thereafter opted for lying low. Otherwise, anyone who came back after being away for two or three years, and picked up the *Daily News*, the *Post*, and *Newsday*, would see on their front pages most of the same old names—an unaccustomed sign of stability in a city more often associated with impermanence and the transitory life.

The *News* headline on March 19th, "FIT FOR A QUEEN," referred to the fact that the former queen of the Palace Hotel, as the hotel's ads described Leona Helmsley (a biography of her is entitled "The Queen of Mean"), had learned at the federal courthouse that the last appeal of her 1989 conviction and subsequent sentencing had been turned down and she would have to serve a four-year sentence in a federal penitentiary. With some sense of irony, Judge Thomas Griesa set as the date for the start of her jail term April 15th, the day "the little people" (as she had been quoted at her trial as saying) pay taxes, and so does everyone else. If, during next year's mayoral race, Giuliani brags about his record as a federal prosecutor, he is likely to mention Mrs. Helmsley (and Boesky, whom he also indicted) but not Imelda Marcos, who was acquitted of all charges after a three-month trial and makes headlines these days from Manila. Last fall, she left her town house in Manhattan, where she had cut a stately figure on the party circuit, for the Philippines, which allowed her to return if she agreed to be tried for looting the national treasury. While she waits for the trial to begin, she has hit upon a way to try to beat that criminal justice system—whiling away her time with a campaign for the Presidency of the Philippines, which, if successful, might well lead to a happy resolution of her latest legal problems.

The days when Donald Trump was making big news by suggesting that he might someday give in to the clamor of his admirers and run for President of the United States, or by announcing plans to build the world's tallest building on Manhattan's West Side, or by finding it appropriate to name his latest Atlantic City casino the Taj Mahal, after the mausoleum constructed by an Indian potentate of untold wealth, are history now. The most recent Trump headline was on the inside pages, and had to do with the transfer of a forty-nine-per-cent interest in the Plaza Hotel to his creditors. (When he bought the Plaza, in 1988, he called it "the ultimate trophy in the world.") However, many editors are creatures of habit (and nostalgia), and any time new developments are rumored in Trump's relationship with his present lady friend or his former wife, the words "MARLA!," "IVANA!," "DONALD!"—in huge type—can be counted on to jump out at passersby from the newsstands once again.



George Steinbrenner, despite his fifty-five-per-cent ownership of the Yankees, was forced into relative sports-story obscurity in August, 1990, after Baseball Commissioner Fay Vincent banned him from exerting day-to-day control over the team, or even attending a game unless he bought a ticket. However, Steinbrenner's efforts to maneuver his way around legal obstacles that would prevent his return to baseball have brought him into the headlines again—although a headline that said "HE'S B-A-C-K!" (no one had to ask who) was premature. There is considerable evidence that he has been missed. Managers have been fired and hired, and valuable players have been let go, but without Monstrous George (whose desk-top slogan was "Lead, Follow, or Get the Hell Out of the Way!") to blame for it all a lot of the fun was gone. Dinkins and Cuomo have both said that if he should be allowed to come back it would suit them fine, presumably because he has said he would promise to keep the Yankees in New York. Many fans are convinced that his first move after his return would be to start making arrangements to have the team play across the Hudson, in New Jersey's Meadowlands—although local residents, naturally, think that the name New Jersey Yankees has no class at all.

The New Yorker whose name and face have lately been on the national front pages more than any other local resident's is John Gotti, who in happier times was a resident of Howard Beach, Queens, but for the past fifteen months has occupied a jail cell in the Metropolitan Correctional Center, the federal prison just a few steps from City Hall. Since January 21st, Gotti, alleged to be the head of the Gambino crime family, has been on trial in a Brooklyn federal courthouse on an array of charges involving racketeering and five counts of murder—one of the murders being that of Paul Castellano, the former head of the Gambino family, who was gunned down in December, 1985, as he entered Sparks Steak House, on East Forty-sixth Street. Gotti's approach to the court proceedings is unworried, even jocular, and that is not surprising, since each of his previous trials in the last six years—there were three—ended in either a dismissal or an acquittal. This time, the government's hopes are high, because the ammunition against him includes several miles of conversations secretly taped inside his favorite haunt, the Ravenite Social Club, in Manhattan's Little Italy, and also includes the testimony of one of his closest henchmen, Salvatore (Sammy the Bull) Gravano. Like Gotti's, Gravano's courtroom style had its admirers. Gravano casually admitted to having committed nineteen murders (*Newsday* and the *Post* printed the names and dates on their front pages), and when he was asked whether

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one of his encounters had been followed by a murder he said, "I would imagine so." After he testified that preparations for the Castellano murder included dressing the four designated shooters in white trenchcoats and Russian fur hats, he was asked whether this had run the risk that they would attract attention; his answer was "In this city, no." Seats at the Gotti show were in heavy demand, although two University of Illinois students claimed that they were there because they couldn't get into the David Letterman show. Actors, including Anthony Quinn, stopped by, explaining that they might be asked to play roles in "Gotti, the Movie." One man who did not give this explanation was John Amos, a star of "Roots." He said of Gotti, "I just like the way he carries himself." On being asked how that was, he said, "Like a winner."

For the trial, *Newsday* offered every few days an artist's tinted sketch of what the defendant, the people sitting with him, or the prosecution staff had worn in court the day before, along with fashion commentary. "Calm stripes and turbulent ties are standout fashion features of the men occupying the Gotti benches . . . much like the garb of the so-called 'Dapper Don' himself. . . . Younger men in the Gotti entourage prefer more extreme peaked lapels and generally do not have cuffs on their trousers." By March 25th, the prosecution and the defense had rested, and the jury would soon decide whether the Dapper Don would be one of the number of major local celebrities who, in the immediate future, would be making headlines from jail cells.

Early in February, a sharp-eared reporter in the Gotti courtroom heard Gotti ask one of his peaked-lapel henchmen, "I wonder how Tyson's doing," the boxer then being on trial, in Indianapolis, for rape. Tyson, of course, was not doing well, and on February 10th was found guilty. His conviction came two years to the day after he had, astonishingly, lost the heavyweight championship to Buster Douglas in Tokyo. Donald Trump had been with Tyson in that city, getting ready to sign him up for his next title fight after the expected victory over Douglas. Now, two years later, Tyson didn't have the heavyweight title and Trump no longer had full title to the Taj Mahal. After Tyson's conviction, Trump was there for him again, proposing that a large trust fund be set up, to be administered by the State of Indiana, that would provide monetary damages for the young woman Tyson had been found guilty of raping and for other rape victims. In return, Tyson would be spared serving any jail time and would be free to keep on fighting, possibly in one of Trump's casinos. This they apparently saw as being only fair, since Tyson was said to be convinced that he would have been acquitted if he had been tried not in the straight-backed hinterlands but in New York, which has a better understanding of the rights and privileges of celebrities. Nothing came of Trump's proposal, and on March 26th the former champion was sentenced to serve three concurrent six-year terms in the Indiana penitentiary.

Tyson's reputation in his home town—he was born in Brooklyn—had been downgraded even before the rape trial. After the promoter Don King took over his career, he officially moved to Cleveland, but he still spent a lot of time in this city. On the night of December 28th, eight young people were crushed to death and twenty-nine were injured (one later died) at the entrance to the City College gymnasium in Harlem, where they had hoped to attend a basketball game in which some well-known rap artists were scheduled to play. So far, no one—promoter, supervising city policeman, or City College official—has been charged with any crime in connection with the event, despite the deaths. Tyson had been invited to the game and was inside the gym, but as the bodies of those who were dead and those whose lives were eventually saved were brought into the room he left quickly by another door. "Why didn't he scream out or do something?" Christina Brown, the mother of one of the victims, asked. The crowd "would have responded to him because of who he is." Tyson's response to criticism over his hasty departure was to enlist the help of the Reverend Al Sharpton. (Perennial headliners do tend to hang out together.) On December 31st, the two showed up in front of Mrs. Brown's house, in the Bronx, with a check for seventy-five hundred dollars, accompanied by a number of reporters and television crews. She announced that Tyson and Sharpton would not be

allowed in her house. "If they want to make a donation, why do they have to do it in front of the TV cameras?" she said, not understanding the accepted rules of celebrityhood.

THE reputations of some big local newsmakers may recently have declined somewhat, but those of others—especially the Reverend Sharpton—have been elevated. He is now formally in the race for the Democratic nomination for the United States Senate—one of five candidates vying for the privilege of running against the incumbent, the Republican Alfonse D'Amato. Lately, several local black columnists have detected qualities of statesmanship in him. Sheryl McCarthy, of *Newsday*, noted that he had changed his "white folks are the enemy" theme and begun to march against black-on-black violence, and that he no longer wore jumpsuits but, rather, a conservative gray suit and tie. "Sharpton has always been smarter than he's given credit for," she wrote, and added, "Anybody who can rally enough troops to stop traffic on the Brooklyn Bridge and bring the subways to a halt for hours, as Sharpton did during one of his 'Day of Outrage' protests a few years ago, gets points with me." Earl Caldwell, a *News* columnist, wrote, "More and more Sharpton's voice has come to be valued. He has put a black response where, without him, there would be none." Sharpton has explained, "My key weapon is that I'm going to be underestimated," and certainly no one had estimated that his picture would be on the front page of Harlem's *Amsterdam News* with that of Cardinal O'Connor, both men beaming as they shook hands. The headline on the story below the picture asked "IS CARDINAL O'CONNOR ABOUT TO ENDORSE AL SHARPTON?" On the morning of this year's St. Patrick's Day parade, Sharpton, whose religious affiliation is Pentecostal, attended the annual pre-parade Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral, where the picture was taken. He announced that he would not march in the parade. (The Ancient Order of Hibernians, which is in charge of the parade, had prevented Irish-American lesbians and gays from marching in it under their own banner.) However, he said, "I will not boycott the Cardinal." He reported that O'Connor had said to him at the cathedral entrance, "May the best man win." Sharpton said, "I am the best man, so he must be talking about me."

There is a suspicion that it amused the Cardinal to have his picture taken giving the big hello to the Reverend Al, with whom Dinkins is not always on the best of terms—the Mayor, who cherishes his relationship with O'Connor, not being at that moment in the Cardinal's favor. He had declined to march in the parade, taking the side of the gay and lesbian Irish-Americans, whose life style is regarded by the Church as an affront to its teachings. During the Mass, O'Connor had delivered what some interpreted as a sharp criticism of Dinkins' absence. The wood on the next morning's issue of *Newsday*, referring to the alleged message from the Cardinal to the Mayor, was "SHAME ON YOU."

Though Dinkins took a shot from O'Connor over this year's March 17th events, it was less dramatic than the 1991 parade, when he had been the target of solid objects. Last year, gay and lesbian Irish-Americans were allowed to march with one of the parade's contingents, and Dinkins marched with them. The Mayor's press secretary, Lee Jones, got a nice laugh then when he described the beer cans thrown at the Mayor by non-gays on the sidelines as "O'Scuds." But some *Times* editor failed to get the joke: when the paper repeated the witticism, Jones was quoted as having said of the St. Patrick's Day missiles, "Oh, Scuds."

March is the month not only of the St. Patrick's Day parade but of the annual musical lampoon put on by the Inner Circle, whose members are present and former political reporters. The title of the show this year was "Dunces with Wolves." Dinkins may have assumed from the title that the reporters would come down hard on him, which is customary treatment for mayors on such occasions. However, he has had a rough time of it lately, what with the devastating polls and revelations every week or so—often the result of investigative work by the press—that called into question not only his managerial competence but his ethical standards. The message of the show's final song about him (from the musical "Seesaw") was more friendly than he was braced for, considering the source: "It's not where you start/ It's where you finish/And you might still finish on top!"

—ANDY LOGAN

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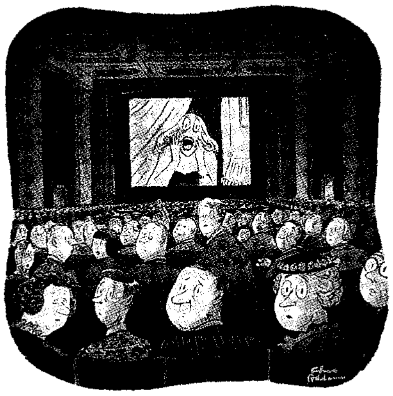

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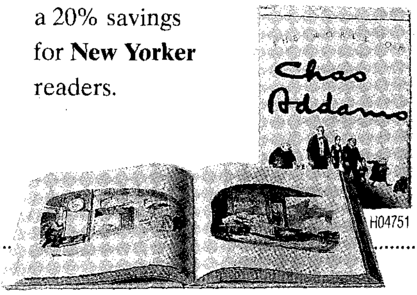

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Nearly all of the contents of this book originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

BOOKS

Kat and Maus

OF all the art forms invented or uniquely transformed by Americans, the comic book is the only one that has not undergone vigorous development in the last fifty years. Think of jazz, musical comedy, the movies: nothing today is as it was. Yet the comic book, itself only a little over fifty years old, is pursuing the same goals that it projected in the late nineteen-thirties, when the art centered on superheroes who fought crime, outwitted evil geniuses, and began to clear the world of Japanazis. We even entertain the same heroes—Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, the Sub-Mariner, all created by 1941 and still popular today.

Where is the daredevil grotesquerie that informed the comic strip in the century's first decades, when comics came not in books but wrapped into the Sunday papers as "the funnies"? There were no superheroes then, no crime-fighting. Everything was pranks and wonder—in the languid architectural excesses of Winsor McKay's "Little Nemo" or the contentious farce of George Herriman's "Krazy Kat," not to mention the frenzies of Rudolph Dirks' "The Katzenjammer Kids," a somewhat less than inspired strip but to many readers the essence of what the comic was invented to be: impish nonsense.

The comic book and its supermen marginalized the Nemos and Krazys, and changed the very spirit of the comics. The breezy cynicism that had informed the art from its beginning, in R. F. Outcault's "The Yellow Kid," gave way in the comic book to a steely sense of mission and to plotted stories. The comic was whimsy; the comic book was a lesson, taught by drearily admirable thugs who could do no wrong. Les Daniels' recent "Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics," an energetic and colorful picture-and-text book, traces the rise of the firm that put some personality into the superhero. Marvel's only real rival, DC Comics, had Superman and Batman, warriors of unqualified resolve. But Marvel's Sub-Mariner, the ruler of an undersea realm ecologically oppressed by mortals, nourished a hatred of "white devils" in particular and routinely wrecked New York City in the manner of King Kong; Spider-Man suffered from self-esteem problems; and some of Marvel's most successful superheroes were mutants—the Thing, the Incredible Hulk, the X-Men.

Daniels' text touches on events that shaped a history not only for Marvel but for the comic book in general: the on-and-off popularity of what are known as "funny animal" titles, such as "Oswald the Rabbit" and "Donald Duck"; the industry's institution of self-censorship in the nineteen-fifties in order to disarm legislative suppression, much as the Hollywood studios did in the nineteen-thirties; the attempt in the nineteen-seventies to bring social issues into play; and the rise of the "graphic novel"—the current term for full-length comic stories—in the nineteen-eighties. Nevertheless, if the comic book grew it never *changed*—never abandoned its first gods and their worship.

So Art Spiegelman's "Maus" (Pantheon; two volumes, $37), a comic book about the Holocaust, comes as something startling. There are no superheroes, no funny animals. "Maus" is realistic, autobiographical, for the story is framed by the author's visits with his father, Vladek, a survivor of Auschwitz, who, in a sorrowfully matter-of-fact way, tells his son what befell him before and during the war—the very events that Spiegelman is going to illustrate for us.

How he does so provides "Maus" with its governing metaphor. "Normal men," David Rousset wrote in discussing the Nazi death camps, "don't know that everything is possible." Spiegelman draws no human faces; except in one sequence, every character is an animal. The Jews are mice, the Germans cats, the Poles pigs. (Vladek, his wife, Anja, and their little son, Richieu, are, of course, depicted as mice, though they live in Sosnowiec, in Poland.) Spiegelman has said that his model, in part, was the value of life among farm animals, where mice are exterminated, because that is how one naturally treats vermin, and pigs are kept alive for a while and then slaughtered. The Americans are dogs—reflecting their "mongrel" racial origin, Spiegelman says—but dogs are also known for strength and amiability,

"Let's date to see if we should go out."

which are qualities that Vladek notes in the liberators of Europe.

Spiegelman indulges in touches of humor, drawing the French as frogs and the Swedes as reindeer and, when Anja consults a fortune-teller, treating the Gypsy as a moth. Amusingly, when the Jews pass among the Poles as Christians they wear pig masks. "Maus," however, is not comic—but then neither is the comic book, except for the funny animals that entertain its youngest readers but are not really part of the epical action, horror, and science fiction that characterize the American comic book. Comics—"the funnies"—were funny. The comic *book* is storytelling.

"Maus" is honest and brutal. The choice of cat and mouse emphasizes the opportunistic relationship that Europe's powers have maintained with Europe's Jewry. The mice are spunky but helpless. The cats are sadistic. The animal metaphor provides Spiegelman with his strongest link with tradition, for both the comic strip and the comic book defined their viewpoint by creating a mini-universe of unique characters, locales, and inventions. We think of Little Nemo's eternally thwarted mission of staying with the Princess in Slumberland; of his comrades Flip and the Candy Kid; of Nemo's inevitable awakening in the last panel. We think of Krazy Kat's Coconino County, with its bemusingly shifty terrain, its animal denizens, and, at the center, the delirious brick of Ignatz Mouse that bonds the romantic triangle of Kat and Mouse and Kop. We think of Superman's *Daily Planet* and Metropolis and Kryptonite; of Captain Marvel's cover identity (newscaster Billy Batson), slogan of transformation ("Shazam!"), deathless nemesis (Dr. Sivana), and bizarre sidekick (Tawky Tawny, a tame tiger dressed as a man); of "Peanuts" and its little community in which anything may occur except a grownup.

"Maus," too, creates its universe—one of hiding and roundups and survival in the very City of Death, Auschwitz. Yet "Maus" encircles this with a second universe, of suburban life and summers in the country and your nagging old father who is always delighted to see you yet begins disapproving and grouching the moment you appear. "Maus" combines two genres—it's a sitcom containing a horror thriller. The comics have always been a fantastical medium, not only in such obvious examples as the phantom adventures of "Little Nemo" or the Dada moralism of "Krazy Kat" or the extravagant villains that adorn "Dick Tracy" and "Batman" but even in basically naturalistic strips, like "Blondie" or "Peanuts." Friends erupt into battle over nothing; animals converse. Spiegelman has turned that convention inside out by giving us the most incredible fantasy in comics history: something that actually occurred.

"Maus" is historical but also confessional. Art Spiegelman is both the work's author and one of its main characters, an American bohemian and the son of a survivor who is also a comics artist and especially the artist of *this* comic. He is the man who at once hears and "designs" the story. It's a strange double role to play—especially because for the most part the authors of comic books have been anonymous workers on an assembly line. One person wrote the "script," another pencilled the layouts, a third inked them in, and others handled the lettering and the coloring. Some artists inked in their own layouts; some also wrote their own scripts. But these auteurs were few.

What gives "Maus" its unique attitude is Spiegelman's awkward interlocutory position, as the stage manager of a theatre at once so personal and so public. "Real power begins where secrecy begins," Hannah Arendt wrote. This comic on the horror of real power is an act of real helplessness, appallingly honest. Recounting one of history's most deeply pondered and psychoanalyzed chapters in terms of cat and mouse, Spiegelman quite simply ushers us into the land of evil. It is as if he were saying, "Stop pondering and believe in it. Cats kill mice not out of callous political necessity but because cats are evil. They kill mice for sport and profit." Again, Arendt, speaking of the guards of Hitler's death camps, called the camps "amusement parks for beasts in human form," the converse of Spiegelman's metaphor. The Holocaust is so terrifyingly picturesque—so beyond what we think of as real life, what we think of as *possible*—that its commentators keep dressing it, styling it. It cannot be described to normal men and believed, so it must be conjured up artistically, almost invented.

Yet "Maus" is a testimonial docu-

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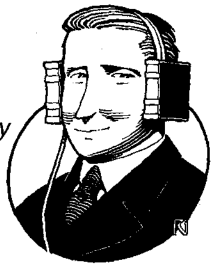

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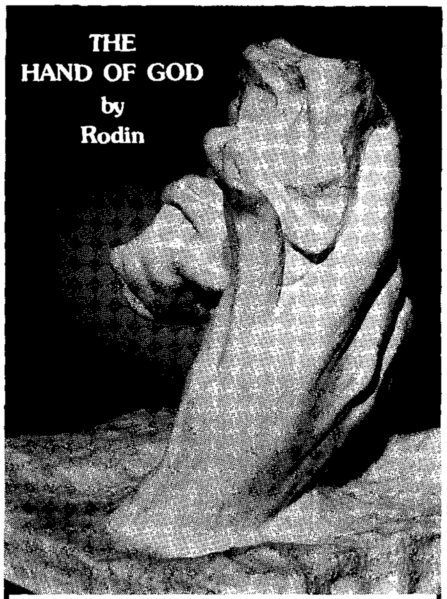

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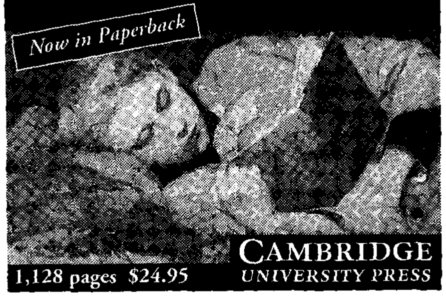

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ment. The American comic book derived its power from the exuberance of its fantasy, its ability to devise whatever it needed—time warps, secret formulas, eccentric laws of physics—to keep the action in flight. "Maus" derives much of its power, even its power as art, from our knowledge not only that there were many true stories like the one recounted in "Maus" but that the one recorded in "Maus" is true. Comic-book stories could be dashed off—it is notable that comic-book publishing was one of the few industries that very young people, even teenagers, could break into at the élite level. Kids can go all night. Yet the two rather trim volumes of "Maus" (Volume I was published in 1986, Volume II last autumn) took Spiegelman thirteen years to complete—years not only of taping his father's recollections but of travel to such places as Auschwitz, to see for himself how to picture camp life. What did a roll call look like? How was a crematorium laid out? Spiegelman was even able to consult drawings that had been made by prisoners at the time. A novelist adapting Vladek's story could have been content with Vladek's tapes, but a draftsman must take a look around.

The realistic witness of Spiegelman's art, his naturalism in treating such an unnatural event, at once tames and exalts his animal imagery. Spiegelman disarms our disbelief with the authenticity of his backgrounds—his urban housefronts and death-camp chimneys, ranging from Sosnowiec through a levelled Europe, in what the historian John Lukacs has called "Year Zero," to postwar Queens and the Catskills. Such naturalism soothes the tension between the grandeur of Spiegelman's subject and the quaintness of his use of animals as characters. At the same time, the directness of the narrative transforms the comic book's traditional funny animals into men and women at the heart of history, Lenin's *kto kovo* (the "who does what to whom") as it was experienced not by those at the center of power but by the actual killers and victims. There is no Captain America, but there was a Sosnowiec, an Auschwitz, a Year Zero.

Better, there was Vladek Spiegelman, loving among his family and resourceful during the terror but, as his son portrays him in the present day, maddeningly intransigent, stingy, and manipulative. He leaves a telephone message that he has had a heart attack just to insure that his son will return the call. Having lured his son and daughter-in-law to his Catskills bungalow through the application of emotional blackmail, he then screams at them to be quiet so he can sleep, though they have been whispering. He grandly offers a closetful of dead Anja's clothes to his second wife as a trousseau. He follows his guests around the room, straightening everything they touch. Vladek's insistent suggestion that Art and his wife move in with him becomes, by a fine irony, the real horror of the story: Auschwitz is the macguffin. For "Maus" is not about what happened to Vladek and the millions of other victims of the Nazis. "Maus" does deal with this, and in great detail: the novel's second volume, subtitled "And Here My Troubles Began," presents Vladek's first hour in Auschwitz on page 25 and does not reunite Vladek and Anja in postwar Poland until page 136, the final page of the book. Nevertheless, "Maus" is really about the present's attempts to comprehend this staggering past—about normal men trying to believe the impossible. Thus the book's central relationship is not that of cat and mouse but that of Art and Vladek. This is why "Maus" is terrifying: not for its brutality but for its tenderness and guilt.

ONE reason the comic book has been regarded as the least interesting of the American arts is its lack of irony or ambivalence. Yes, Marvel's superheroes had that touch of approach-avoidance about their work, but essentially each comic was one thing all the time, for page after page—action fantasy, war thriller, chaste farce. "Maus" is two things at once, not only in the two stories that unfold simultaneously—that of Vladek's past and that of Vladek and Art's present—but also in the author's fear of, yet need for, autobiographical representation, and his affectionate yet exasperated view of his father. "I don't want that a stranger should mix into our private stories," Vladek says when Art suggests that Vladek and his second wife see a marriage counsellor. Yet strangers are mixing in, not only into Vladek's vexed second marriage but into his entire life, including its most humiliating episodes, as the persecution of his people and the "selection" and deportation that disrupt normal life in his native land are amplified into systematic genocide in camps that have no normality and no natives.

Nevertheless, Vladek maintains an astonishing calm as he reviews his past. It is a measured, balanced narrative, clear and for the most part quite precisely focussed, as if he had been considering the shape and the data of this story since Year Zero—as if, like a character in a Norse saga, he had been waiting decades for his son to mature before apprising him of wrongs done to the family honor in the remote past. Ironically, it is petty nuisances of the present day that cause Vladek to lose his temper—his son's lack of interest in helping to put up the storm windows, for instance. Telling of the keenest outrages—even of how the Nazis, in setting fire to the bodies of Jews both dead and alive, speeded the work by retrieving and repouring the rendered fat "so everyone could burn better"—Vladek retains his reflective tone. Moreover, he speaks a curiously endearing language—the kind of immigrant's English that confuses "who" with "what" and places adverbial phrases too early in each sentence. Dropping a plate as he is clearing the table, Vladek cries, "Oi! You see how my head is? It's my favorite dish now broken!" Or, speaking of Jewish resistance to the Nazis, "In some spots people did fight. . . . But you can kill maybe one German before they kill fast a hundred from you. Then it's everyone dead." The strangely pleasing lilt gives Vladek the flavor of a benumbed bard chanting out a "Beowulf" that is all monsters and no redemptive warriors.

One might have expected something less quotidian and more intense from Spiegelman, the co-founder and co-editor of *Raw*, a magazine devoted to new-wave comic art. *Raw* is what became of the underground when it surfaced, where the lurid and opaque mate with the whimsical and revolutionary. Spiegelman's own "Ace Hole, Midget Detective" is typical, a spoof of pulp detective fiction ("It was a mean and vicious caper in a mean and vicious city") filled with homages to modern art. "Little Nemo" and "The Katzenjammer Kids" are worked in, Picasso's woman with the celebrated two-eyed profile is a leading player, and a representation of "Guernica" appears under a quotation from the Comics Code ("In every instance good

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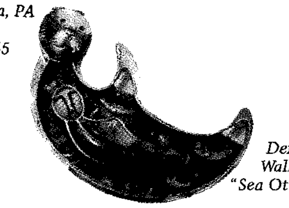

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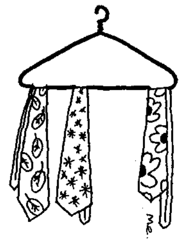
shall triumph over evil"). In its racy, impious attitude and dynamic visuals, "Ace Hole" typifies the underground—but how would this approach have worked on a subject as serious as the Holocaust?

As it happens, Spiegelman gives us a taste of the *Raw* version of "Maus" in the brief "Prisoner on the Hell Planet" (first published in 1973, in *Short Order Comix*, and included in the first volume of "Maus"), an Expressionistic stylization of how it feels to be the child of survivors: dressed for life in prison stripes, surrounded by grotesques, and fingered for the murder of your mother—Anja killed herself, for unclear reasons, in 1968. "Menopausal depression," "Hitler did it!," "Mommy!," and "Bitch" scream across a crowded panel showing a heap of corpses, a mother reading to a child (in child-size prison stripes), a tattooed forearm and a wrist being slashed, the corpse in the bathtub, and the anguished prisoner himself. "It was so . . . so *personal!*" Mala, Vladek's second wife, also a survivor, says of "Prisoner on the Hell Planet" in "Maus." "But very accurate," she admits. "Objective."



It is no doubt accurate, but it is anything but objective, for it is Anja Spiegelman's tragedy turned into her son's apologia. The difference between "Prisoner on the Hell Planet" and "Maus" lies not only in the change in style from Expressionism to realism but also in Vladek's becoming the protagonist. As in "Hell Planet," the younger Spiegelman is the over-all first-person narrator. But it is his difficult relationship with his father that centers the work, and his intellectual inquiry into the story (almost as if he were an outsider), rather than his emotional responses (as a survivor of survivors), that drives the action. "Hell Planet" is Art's story. "Maus" is Vladek's story, punctuated by Art's attempts to relate to him as a man as well as a father. For all the infuriatingly niggling habits of the Vladek we see today, for all his interferences and his marvellous ability not to hear what is said no matter how clearly you put it, the Vladek of history is not without honor as he makes his terrible journey. At the very beginning of "Maus," when ten-year-old Art whimpers because he fell while roller-skating and his friends sped off, laughing, Vladek replies, "Friends? Your friends? If you lock them together in a room with no food for a week then you could see what it is, friends!" Yet even in Vladek's tightest squeezes, in hiding or, later, in Auschwitz, he is often *kollegial* with his fellow-sufferers; unselfish, even noble. When Mandelbaum, an old friend from Sosnowiec, turns up at Auschwitz, he is less pathetic than ridiculous, one foot bare in the snow, one hand holding up his billowing pants, and the other arm bearing an undersized shoe, in the hope of a trade. "My God. *Please* God," he begs. "Help me find a piece of string and a shoe that fits!" In his narrative voice-over Vladek tells us, "But here God didn't come. We were all on our own." Yet Vladek plays God, "organizing" the needed items for Mandelbaum, not for gain but out of kindness.

Vladek is generally adept, too, at assessing his situation at each juncture and reckoning the prospects. Though he and Anja are at length captured, during a flight to Hungary, because the Christians they were dealing with were Nazi informers, the scheme had seemed reasonable—and Vladek carefully tested it, in a gambit that the Christians couldn't possibly have countered without knowing Yiddish. It turns out that they did know Yiddish—a questionable moment in a story whose authenticity is otherwise not merely persuasive but epic. After all, what Christian, other than James Cagney, could speak Yiddish? Yet, again, reading "Maus" is an exercise in coming to terms with the impossible.

The very notion of survival despite the Nazis' sheer demented contempt for Jews is itself almost unbelievable. It is not just that Vladek and Anja came alive out of the City of Death but that they managed to get around more formidable incidentals—the transport to the camps in the closed, crammed cars, or the chaos of the last days of the Reich, when the Germans took pains to continue the slaughter of Jews at the cost of a successful retreat from the advancing Russians. Even peace could be fatal: Vladek recounts the return of one survivor who tried to reclaim his home from the Poles who had taken it over. They beat him senseless, then hanged him on his own property.

Through his increasingly astonishing composure in retelling these adventures, Vladek becomes oddly heroic. He's a stingy, grudging superman. Yet he doesn't seem to blame the Germans in particular for his misfortunes—much as, one imagines, mice do not "blame" human beings for regarding their murder as a routine of life, as not only believable but inevitable. Spiegelman emphasizes this in Vladek's walking tour through Germany after the war, when we're shown a family of bombed-out Germans sitting in a roofless ruin as harmless—or, really, *neutral*—cats, rather than as Nazi monsters.

Perhaps this quietly heroic side of Vladek is the reason Art is so forgiving of a father who was overcritical when Art was growing up and is now, not to put too fine a point on it, a real pest. Ceaselessly mourning his first wife and denigrating his second, attempting to overwhelm everyone around him, counting out pennies as if they were loaves of bread back in Auschwitz, even trying to get a refund on a half-eaten box of cereal, Vladek is Art's reproach and challenge and history. If Art were America, Vladek would be a combination of George Washington and Emma Goldman. And it is not only Vladek who confronts Art but also his suicide mother, Anja, and his other close, victimized relative, his brother, Richieu, whom his aunt poisoned in childhood so the Nazis could not take him. "*He'd* have become a *doctor*," Art tells his Christian-born wife, Françoise, "and married a wealthy Jewish girl. . . . The creep."

The colloquial flow of language in "Maus" marks another break with tradition, for dialogue was always a false element in comic books—not because comic books are a fundamentally visual medium but because the writing generally consists of getting superheroes and their nemeses from one skirmish to another, or of furnishing funny animals with antics. Most often, the writers' inventions are nonsense. When Otto Binder needed to develop the technology in a "Captain Marvel" story, he concocted chemical elements out of the terms the comic had already made available—Marvelium, Shazamium, Sivanium. As Art himself notes, describing "Maus" while he is a character in it, "reality is too *complex* for comics. . . . So much has to be left out or distorted."

Yet what in "Maus" has been left out or distorted? Vladek's story is presented as Vladek told it, and Spiegelman took great trouble over the smallest details. But then, who are we to judge what is small in such a tale? Explaining how he built a bunker hidden under a coalbin, which Art reproduces for us in diagram, Vladek observes, "Such things it's good to know exactly how was it—just in case." Spiegelman was so intent on revealing rather than creating that when "Maus II" appeared on the *Times* best-seller list the author wrote to petition the newspaper to list it not under fiction but with the nonfiction titles. (The *Times* complied.)

Still, Spiegelman had to devise dialogue for scenes that weren't described to him or played out before his eyes, and in this regard "Maus" is strong. The voices are apt, the exchanges pointed. Comic-book dialogue is telegraphic; the dialogue in "Maus" is novelistic. Driving to Vladek's Catskills bungalow with Françoise, Art says, "When I was a kid I used to think about which of my parents I'd let the Nazis take to the ovens if I could only save one of them. Usually I saved my mother. Do you think that's normal?"

"*Nobody's* normal," Françoise replies.

The dialogue continues:

> "I wonder if Richieu and I would get along-if he was still alive."
>
> "Your brother?"
>
> "My *ghost*-brother, since he got killed before I was born. He was only five or six. After the war my parents traced down the vaguest rumors, and went to orphanages all over Europe. They couldn't believe he was dead. I didn't think about him much when I was growing up. . . . He was mainly a large, blurry photograph hanging in my parents' bedroom."
>
> "Uh-huh. I thought that was a picture of *you*, though it didn't *look* like you."
>
> "That's the point. They didn't *need* photos of me in their room. . . . I was *alive!* The photo never threw tantrums or got in any kind of trouble. . . . It was an ideal kid, and *I* was a pain in the ass. I couldn't compete."

Drawing this car ride, Spiegelman runs through nearly two dozen panels that are almost entirely "head shots," with an occasional exterior view of the car, simply to maintain the narrative status of a road trip. This is typical of Spiegelman's reliance on dialogue, for much of "Maus" dispenses with the characteristic restlessness of the comic, its whirling greed for ever-new images. Matching Vladek's composed tone rather than the wrenching events that

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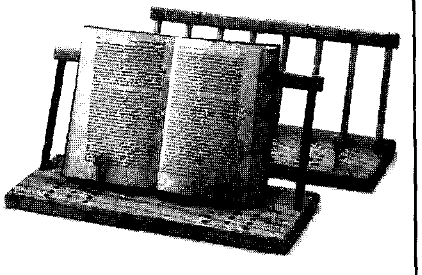

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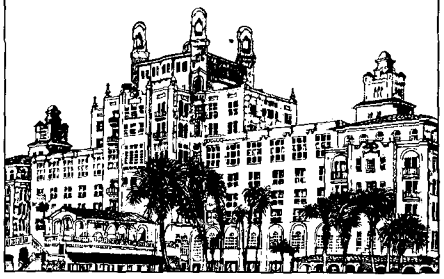

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he describes, Spiegelman's layouts are generally conservative (though capable of startling dramatic variation), and he makes many of his points subtly, as when, early in Volume I, Art tells his father of the plans for "Maus." Vladek has been exercising on a stationary bicycle. "No one wants anyway to hear such stories," he observes, as the artist's-eye view falls from a head shot to a look at Vladek's arms, the left one showing his death-camp tattoo.

Some of Spiegelman's visual observations are very telling. During a family dinner back in Sosnowiec, as the grown-ups discuss ration coupons and the black market, little Richieu makes a mess of his food, his mother reprimands him, he breaks into tears, and she comforts him—a bit of pantomime that establishes a feeling for the strict yet indulgent family life that Art's forebears enjoyed, without interfering with the conversation running in the speech balloons. It's a cinematic touch: one thing shown while another thing is said.

Some of "Maus" is just one thing shown—purely visual. On the run from the Nazis, seeking a place to hide, Vladek and Anja walk on a road drawn as a vast swastika: in this Third Holy Roman Empire, all roads lead to Auschwitz. It is through such pictures that we realize that "Maus" is a comic book not because comic books are what the author draws but because comics have a potential as a narrative art form which Captain Marvel never imagined.

The most remarkable sequence in "Maus" occurs in Volume II, when Art is seen as a man wearing a mouse mask—that is, seen not as Art, son of Vladek, but as Art Spiegelman, artist, passing himself off as some kind of Jew—huddled over his drawing board on top of a heap of mouse corpses. Immediately surrounded by aggressive interviewers and an atrocious entrepreneur ready to market the "Maus" vest that Art Spiegelman affects, he fends them off, growing smaller as he loses confidence until, child-size ("Sometimes I just don't feel like a functioning adult," he explains), he visits his psychiatrist, another survivor. Thus Art—a little boy dwarfed by an armchair, talking to an older man about the Holocaust—is finally seen to be what he has truly been all along: the son trying to learn from the father.

Noting the decline of literacy in American life, Spiegelman has predicted that the graphic novel will be "the novel of the twenty-first century." I hope not. But in "Maus," certainly, Spiegelman seems to have produced the first masterpiece in comic-book history, something to keep the promise made by "Little Nemo" and "Krazy Kat," that the comic could become America's most protean art form. That this innovation took fifty years to accomplish is astounding. True, in the nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixties writers were no doubt hobbled by the "good shall triumph over evil" repressiveness of the Comics Code. (Marvel defied the Code's prohibition of the portrayal of illicit drug use in a three-part "Spider-Man" in 1971, and that act of defiance led to a devitalization of the Code's authority and greater freedom for writers.) Still, even before the Code was established, comic-book creators had never shown the slightest interest in developing this unique form, which could potentially combine the vision of a McKay or a Herriman with the observations of a Fitzgerald or a Waugh.

What possibilities Spiegelman opens up! He has shown us how evil triumphs over good, "a lesson very necessary to hear," as Vladek might have put it. For here and there in the two volumes of "Maus" lies yet a third story—Art's attempt to understand why his mother killed herself. He never admits that he *does* understand. But Vladek, I think, explains it for us, in the last panel of Volume II, when, dozing off, he unthinkingly calls Art "Richieu."

This jolting fusion of then and now binds up all the work's major strands—the father-son relationship, the mother's suicide, the cat and mouse, the history. All in this one name, this slip of the tongue: because this panel tells us that, in a certain way, Vladek and Anja never did get out of Auschwitz. For those who suffer a total nullification of their humanity—even if they survive—the past is always present: vivid, relentless, and infinite.

—ETHAN MORDDEN

•

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"I was able to come up with another witness on Saturday," Sunday said Monday.

—*Destin* (*Fla.*) *Log.*

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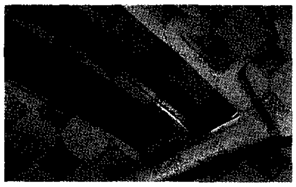

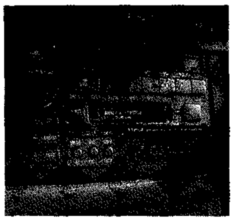

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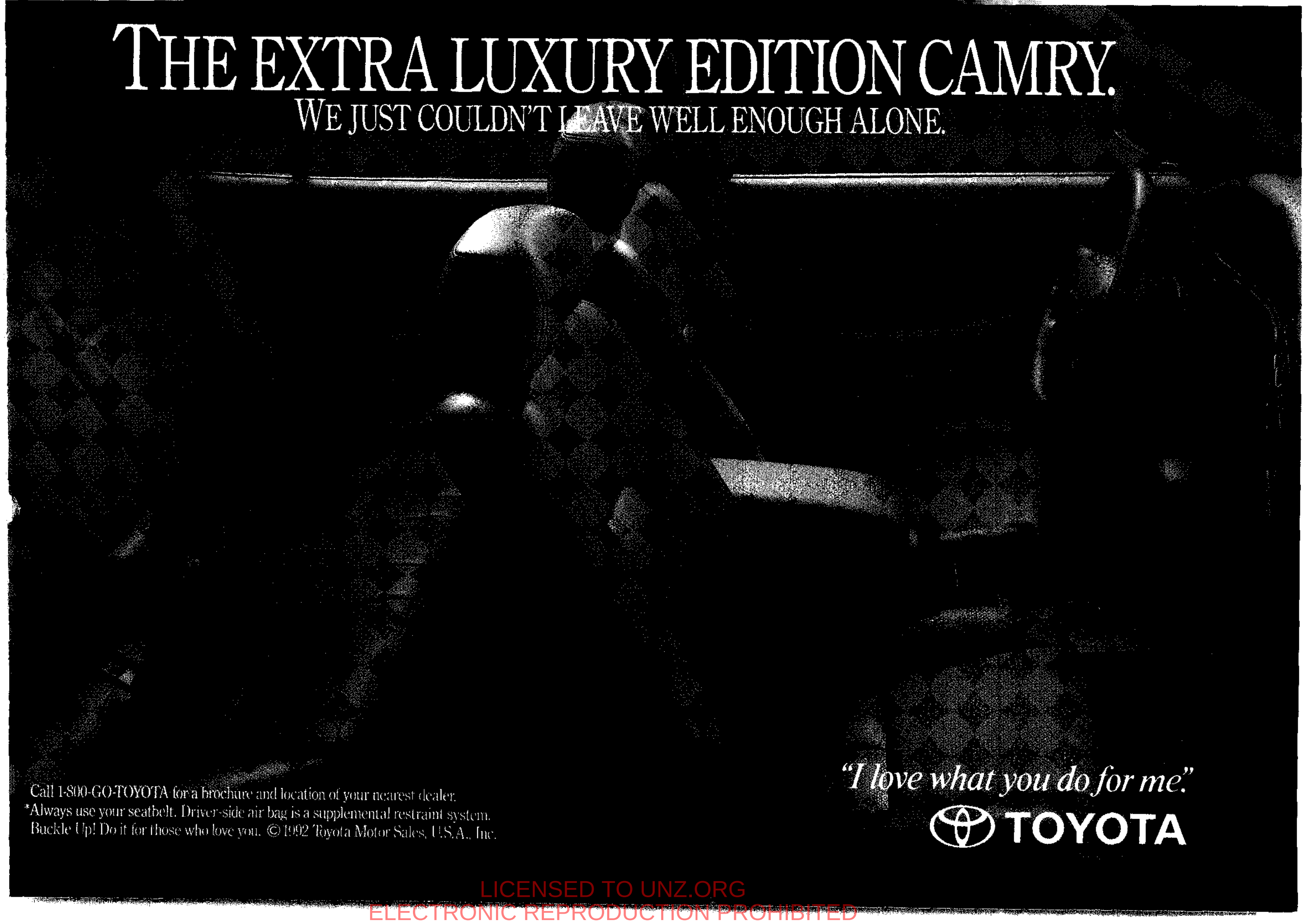

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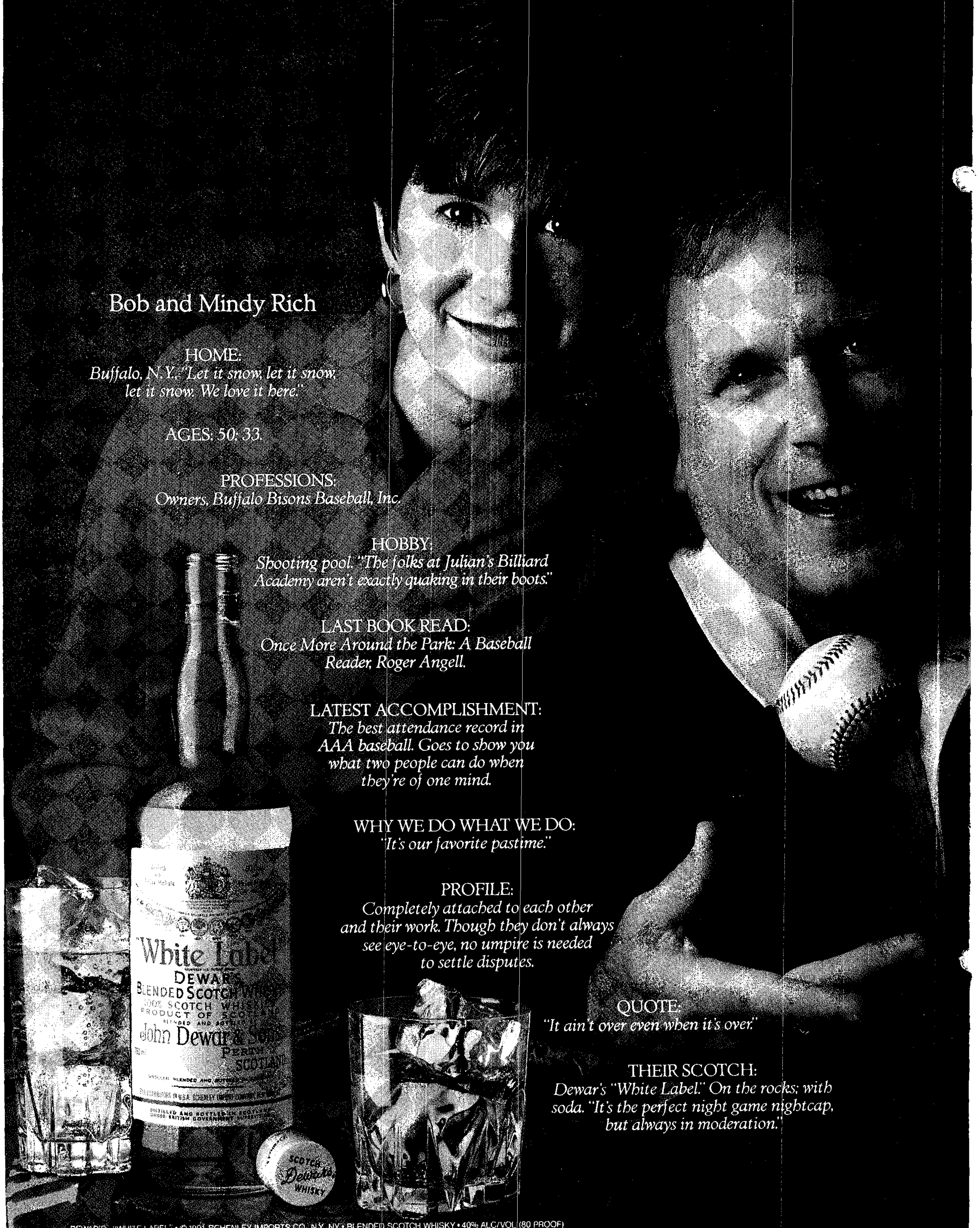
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